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# DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to all the members of the First United Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas, New Mexico, many of whose names do not appear in this book. They are devoted Christians who week after week and year after year obligate themselves to lead and teach our youngsters and adult students.

Why do they give so much time and energy to the church? Could it be they might say: "God's love has blessed me and given me reason to hope that I might qualify for eternal life after death? If I have the time and talent to teach others it is one way of saying, 'Thank You' for my blessings and my hope."

It is a pleasure to have a few words to say in tribute to these unnamed individuals who demonstrate their faith in a most concrete way. The congregation of this church has been described as "like a family that meets so many community needs."

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Several friends have written biographies and are acknowledged at the end of the biography. Researchers and other contributors are similarly credited.

Others who have contributed their talents and time are Susan Ammerman, Ruth Hazelton, Ron Maestas, Marshall Poole, Art Trujillo, Peter Linder, Andrea Crespín, and Ellen Gerdeman-Klein.

As was the case in Volume I, I firmly believe God's guiding hand has been with me. People with specialized talents were found when it appeared that I needed help. They were available and willing to do the task. They worked diligently regardless of the hours.

Also, as with Volume I, I want to pay tribute to my wife, Glenda, who has brought joy and love into my life. Her humor and support have sustained me throughout fifty-six years of married life. Her patience during the years I have devoted to this work has made it all possible.

Las Vegas, New Mexico, August 2003

## PREFACE

The original First Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas, New Mexico was a mission church on the west side of the Gallinas River where Spanish was the dominant language. Built on Chavez Street, it was dedicated to bringing Protestant Christianity, the English language, and education to the community.

Volume I, *Presbyterian Missionaries in Rural Northern New Mexico*, describes the origins of the original church and includes biographies of missionary pioneers of the region. Among these early founders was Sheldon Jackson (1834-1909), the energetic and visionary Presbyterian missionary superintendent of the Rocky Mountain area until 1884. He wrote Rev. John Annin urging him to come to the Territory of New Mexico as a missionary. The railroad was scheduled to reach Las Vegas in about 10 years and Jackson felt that Las Vegas would be a strategic point for a mission church and school.

Volume I begins with John Annin's arrival in Las Vegas with his wife and son in the fall of 1869. He and José Yñéz Perea met and immediately formed a strong friendship. José Yñéz Perea was a young man who owned a sheep ranch east of Las Vegas in San Miguel County. He was from a well-to-do Roman Catholic family, was well educated and much traveled. Reading the Bible had changed his life. Fluent in Spanish and English he was disturbed by the primitive religious beliefs and superstitions of his shepherds. He devoted much time to visiting with them and explaining his conversion to Protestantism. He distributed religious tracts to them, but few could read. Seeing the need he began praying for a missionary and soon thereafter his prayer was answered.

After Annin purchased property on Chavez Street in West Las Vegas, Perea took charge of building an adobe church on it while Annin started a school in an existing building. The students were mostly Spanish speaking. Annin also made field trips to neighboring rural communities: Ocate, Agua Negra (Holman), El Rito (Chacón) and Mora. In an article written for *La Aurora*, a Spanish publication, Perea tells how he and Rafael Gallegos would come to the mission in Las Vegas to study under Rev. Annin. Then they would travel from village to village and ranch to ranch, preaching and distributing Bibles and gospel tracts.

Perea eventually married, trained as a minister and was ordained in 1880. He became minister to a large field of small villages near Bernalillo. In 1890 he moved to another large field and ministered to small villages near Los Lunas. The record indicates he served 27 churches. He described himself as being "John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness preparing the way of the Lord."

Annin's school grew rapidly to about 50 students. The Roman Catholic Church responded in November 1877 by establishing a school taught by Italian Jesuits in a large home capable of housing about 132 students and later moved to a larger building that could accommodate about 240 students. The Roman Catholics had many resources and the advantage of being the traditional church of the Spanish-speaking people. As the Catholic school thrived Annin's school dwindled. He became discouraged and left Las Vegas in May 1880, but he always regarded his time in Las Vegas as the most blessed of his long ministry. When Annin left most of the Las Vegas members joined the much stronger church in Chacón.

Rev. Annin was succeeded by Rev. Josiah McClain, reputedly an indefatigable worker and a man of excellent spirit. He came to Las Vegas alone leaving his sick wife with relatives in Wisconsin. Finding the church, a very small organization with many discouraging problems to overcome and concerned over the condition of his wife, he soon decided to return home.

In 1914 the Presbyterian Board of National Missions established the Embudo Presbyterian Hospital in the Dixon-Embudo area of Rio Arriba County. The need for a similar hospital in Mora County was recognized and in 1965 work began with the help of local people building the Mora Valley Medical Unit. At first it was staffed by Presbyterian medical missionaries and local people.

When New Mexico became a state in 1912, the Congress of the United States was a positive force in writing the Constitution of New Mexico, and under the stern discipline of the Congressional Enabling act, Article XXI, Section 4, a public school system was to be provided.

Volume I also covers the history of the formation of a congregation at El Rito. This account was written by Dora Ortiz Vásquez, whose family helped build the Presbyterian Church in Ócate and who continues to serve the church in Chacón. The story begins when five men went to Trinidad, Colorado, to haul freight to New Mexico. At the time the railroad came only as far as El Moro, Colorado. They spent a Sunday in Trinidad. Not knowing what else to do they walked along the street until they came to a place where they heard singing. They hesitated, but finally went into the hall where they found a group of Christians who welcomed them and gave each one of them a Bible.

Two of the men, Don Manuel Sandoval and Don Juan José Arguello, began to study their Bibles. The Word of God began to be revealed to hearts that were yearning for spiritual guidance. They gave of what they were receiving to their neighbors and relatives and to all whom they came into contact. Soon we find in El Rito a group organized under the leadership of Manuel Sandoval and J. P. Ortega.

Don Juan José Arguello furnished the first place of worship. Because of persecutions by the Roman Catholic Church, the people met in a cellar, where Mr. Arguello also conducted a school and taught people to read and

write in Spanish. The main purpose of the school was to teach people to read the Bible. At first, there were very few pupils. When the group got larger, they met in Mr. Arguello's home. His daughters helped him and they became the first educators in El Rito. That was the beginning of the Mission School that later became the Presbyterian School. (Grainger 1980, 11-12)

Bibles became the central interest of discussion among families and friends. Their heritage drew them to Christ, and adults and children were inspired to learn to read so that they could read for themselves the messages of the Bible. The reformation had already begun in Chacón when the first Protestant ministers arrived in about 1872.

The Presbyterian Church of El Rito was organized by Rev. John Annin on 22 July 1879, but the church building was not begun until several years later. Don Manuel Sandoval and Don Juan P. Ortega were to become resident lay evangelists. They served for about forty years.

Don Manuel Sandoval gave the property and the church building was begun shortly after 1881, but it was never finished until about 1892. The front door of the church, at that time, faced east. Don Gregorio Ortega built the steeple, making the shingles himself. (Grainger 1980, 13)

In addition, Rev. Annin and Rev. James M. Roberts, a pioneer Presbyterian minister of Taos, also crossed the divide and preached in Chacón. Certificates of baptism performed by Mr. Annin, and dating from 1872 to 1880, were reported by Alice Blake in *Presbyterian Mission Work in New Mexico* (1932).

The focus of Volume II is the building and growth of a new First United Presbyterian Church on Douglas Avenue in Las Vegas. It begins with Rev. John Calvin Eastman's arrival in 1880. At that time only five members of the Chavez Street church remained, and Eastman became convinced that the English-speaking newcomers wanted a church closer to their new homes and businesses in East Las Vegas. Under his leadership, the Douglas Avenue church was built in 1881. Both churches continued in use until the congregations merged in 1960, and the old mission church became a "Samaritan House" providing shelter and meals.

In 1883 Eastman was followed by Rev. James Fraser, who revived the mission school and got John Whitlock to work there as a lay minister. The school continued for 11 years. Whitlock devoted part of his time to the students, who were now being educated by Miss Annie Mary Speakman, a close friend of the Frasers. John Whitlock was an extraordinary storyteller and he fascinated the young people. One of the students he greatly influenced was Gabino Rendon. Both Whitlock and Rendon eventually became ordained ministers. In 1895, the boys of the school were transferred to Menaul School in Albuquerque and became a part of the "root" system of that well-known institution.



Rev. Whitlock served in Taos and Rio Arriba Counties and supervised the building of the churches at Embudo and Rincones. Rendon's story is told in the book, *Hand on my Shoulder*, by Edith Agnew.

With a few exceptions, the author has concentrated on biographies of people who have passed away or on couples with one surviving spouse from 1880 to 2002.

# INTRODUCTION

Some of the Indian pueblos of the southwest today are much as they were in centuries past. Word of the pueblos reached the Spanish through Cabeza de Vaca, who may have wandered across southern New Mexico between 1528 and 1536. Fray Marcos de Niza told preposterous, cloud-woven stories describing the area and the “Rich Seven Cities of Cibola.” Under the leadership of Francisco Vázquez de Coronado thirty horsemen from New Spain participated in a full-scale expedition (1540-42) to find the cities. Poor treatment of the Indians led to long-standing hostility between the Indians and the Spanish.

In 1598 Juan de Oñate led an expedition and took possession of New Mexico for the Spanish king. In 1601, Oñate, in search of Quivira, said to be one of the richest Indian villages, led an expedition across present Oklahoma to the plains around Wichita, Kansas. Uncussessful, he returned to New Mexico. (*The New Columbia Encyclopedia*) Nevertheless the Spanish retained some hope of finding the Cities of Gold, and other expeditions were organized every decade or so.

In 1794 Spanish soldiers settled fifty-two families in San Miguel de Vado, now in San Miguel County, New Mexico. The settlement was about eight- and one-half miles upstream on the Pecos River from the larger village Villanueva.

The English-speaking occupation in 1846 and the arrival people from the East were welcomed by many, but there was some bloodshed in Taos, Mora and Las Vegas.

As tensions on the issue of slavery grew in other states, the Constitutional Convention in Santa Fe in 1850 resolved:

*Slavery in New Mexico is naturally impracticable and never, in reality, existed here... we have unanimously agreed to reject it forever (New Mexico's Troubled Years. 1963)*

Nevertheless, the citizens of New Mexico were divided, and by 1861 civil and military leaders were choosing their alliances. The military leaders remained loyal to the anti-slavery Union.

*(New Mexico's) large Hispanic population remained indifferent about (the Civil War issue), but as soon as they heard that Texans (associated with the Confederate Army) were marching up the valley of the Rio Grande in an effort to conquer New Mexico, over 4000 enlisted in the Union Army including a company from Las Vegas.(Gateway to Glorieta)*

The Union Army included a regiment from Colorado, and additional soldiers from California and New Mexico. The opposing armies met and battled at Glorieta, east of Santa Fe. A Union detachment was sent over the mesa to destroy the Confederate camp at Cañoncito. The loss of their

supplies forced the Texans to withdraw otherwise they might have overwhelmed the weak defense at Fort Union.

The situation with the Indians remained unsettled during and after the Civil war.

*A dozen powerful tribes of nomad warrior Indians claimed the land and held the territory. In order to subjugate them Fort Union was established in 1851 30 miles North of Las Vegas. For forty years thereafter the armies of the United States constantly engaged the Indians in warfare. (Lucas 1930)*

The establishment of Fort Union began the real conquest of the West.

*The first physicians and surgeons of the West came with Kearny's army in 1846. When Fort Union was established many more came. The hospital there attracted the best; there was nothing to compare with it West of the Missouri River. Many of the physicians and surgeons stationed there, upon leaving the service, settled in this country. The New Mexico Medical Society was organized in Las Vegas in 1882, being first called The Las Vegas Medical Society. (Las Vegas Centennial).*

When the Civil War ended in 1865, stage stations were established along the Santa Fe Trail. The commerce over the Trail supported improvements in businesses as well as schools and churches in Las Vegas. Stagecoach travel became regular and fairly comfortable.

# 1

## Pioneer Presbyterians in Las Vegas

The arrival of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway on 4 July 1879 brought an influx of English-speaking Midwesterners seeking frontier opportunities. Although the railroad tracks were about a mile east of the Gallinas River, all the existing homes of Las Vegas were on the west side of the river. The intervening land had been farmland, and sections were purchased by the newcomers. They built their businesses near the railroad and bought other tracts for infrastructure and new home-sites. Later the AT & SF Railway built a repair shop for steam engines and employed 300 mechanics in Las Vegas.

The Presbyterian newcomers wanted a church more conveniently located than the Presbyterian Spanish Mission church on Chavez Street and were confident money could be raised to build it. With Rev. Eastman's leadership and support of the new citizens in the community the church was underway. A number of problems arose:

- The building site was changed.
- The contractor made a poor selection of foundation material and was let go with a compromise settlement.
- The agreement with the architect was cancelled.
- The planned stone superstructure was too heavy for the foundation, so a frame church was substituted.

After these problems were settled, B.B. Borden, an ordained elder, superintended the work and carpenters were paid by the day. By October 1881 the building was finished and accepted as it was evident it had been done in a workmanlike manner. The pews were purchased a year later in Chihuahua, Mexico. Rev. Eastman made it clear that the new Douglas Avenue church was the same church and embodied all of the membership of the Chavez Street church. The name was the same, but the first church was a mission church and the second church did not have that designation. This explains his naming the new church the First Presbyterian Church.

Rev. Eastman was given the lot next to the church and built a home there. He only lived in it for six months when health problems caused him to move to California in November of 1882.

From the beginning, the First United Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas has had close ties with the small rural Presbyterian churches within a fifty-mile radius. Our membership has always welcomed members of those

congregations and always attempted to be of help to the churches in times of need. Many of our most dedicated workers are individuals whose roots were the small rural churches.

As the population of Las Vegas increased and new homes and business buildings were built, the infrastructure of the community grew as needed. The Agua Pura (Pure Water) Company was organized in 1882 by Jefferson Raynolds. The first facilities for the water storage system were not adequate for providing pure, clean water, and in 1910 the company built the secluded Peterson Dam which could contain eighty million gallons. Upstream water was conveyed to it by means of a flume supported on a granite cliff high above the level of the river. Fire hydrants were installed in 1881 and 1882. Both West Las Vegas and East Las Vegas enlisted volunteer fire fighters for their horse-drawn fire fighting wagons. In 1916 both organizations acquired fire trucks.

## REVEREND JOHN CALVIN EASTMAN

***The English-speaking newcomers wanted a church close to their new homes. A new church was built in East Las Vegas on Douglas Avenue under Eastman's guidance.***



The third pastor to serve the Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas was John Calvin Eastman, born in Crawfordville, Indiana, 8 July 1845 of English descent. He was educated at Hanover College in Indiana and attended McCormick and Lane Seminaries. He graduated from Lane Seminary in 1872, and was ordained at the Presbyterian Church of Greenville, Ohio, where he served as pastor from 1872 until he came to Las Vegas in 1880. Rev. Eastman married Mary P. Schenk of Franklin, Ohio, on 29 June 1875. They had one child, Robert, when they came to Las Vegas.

Mr. Eastman described the church that existed on his arrival here, in a letter to Rev. Norman Skinner, 18 December 1896. (Mr. Skinner collected letters from as many former pastors of the Las Vegas church as he could find, in celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the church.) Mr. Eastman wrote from San Luis Obispo, California:

the Las Vegas church as

### **Rev. John Calvin**

*When Rev. John Annin was in charge of the Las Vegas work, it was a mission church, constituted almost wholly of Mexican people, and when he organized the Mexican Church at El Rito (Chacón) he transferred nearly all the membership of the Las Vegas church to that church.*

We should interject that Mr. Eastman, like many Easterners, looked upon New Mexico almost like a foreign country and the native people as foreigners (Mexicans), hence the attitude that this was territory for foreign missions.

The original Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas built by John Annin and José Yñés Perea still stands as a mission on Chavez Street in Old Town Las Vegas. The adobe building continued in use as a church until the congregation merged with the new town church on 28 August 1960. It is now used as a "Samaritan House" to provide a night's shelter and meal for people needing temporary shelter such as transients or members of broken families. The Douglas Avenue church building was completed in 1881 under the guidance of Mr. Eastman.

Mr. Eastman continues in his letter:

*In June of 1880, I had gone from Greenville, Ohio, after a happy pastorate of eight years, to Colorado seeking my wife's health. I had but arrived in Pueblo, Colorado, when Brother McClain, who had heard of me through Dr. Sheldon Jackson, telegraphed me to come on immediately and relieve him and take charge of the field. I accepted the solicitation and arrived in Las Vegas, with my wife and our four-year-old child on the 11th of June, putting up at what was then the new St. Nicholas Hotel.*

*Rev McClain gave us a hearty welcome, and on the following Sabbath services were held in the Mission Church in the Old Town, in which we both participated, and early in the week following he took his departure leaving me in charge of the field.*

*On examination into the situation we found but five members of the Las Vegas church upon the ground. There were no elders, and Mr. Brayton B. Borden was the only man in the membership. Mr. Giles Kellogg had taken hold of the Sunday school and under his inspiring superintendence it was making fine headway. Professor John Robertson, of precious memory and his excellent wife were the first to join our little band...and immediately a meeting of the church was called and he and Mr. Borden were elected elders.*

The minutes of the Session, dated 11 July 1880 show that seven persons were received into membership in the church: John and Annie Robertson, Mrs. J. O. Wood, Mrs. Mary P. Eastman, by letter; and Mrs. E. T. Mills, Miss Fannie Herbert, and Mr. Vizier, on confession of faith. John Robertson was a professor at the Las Vegas Academy, then occupying a two-story building with a tower and gabled roof, standing on the southeast corner of Douglas and Twelfth streets. He and Mr. Borden were the third and fourth elders ordained in the Las Vegas church, ordained 18 July 1880. In his letter of 1 December 1896 to Rev. Norman Skinner, Mr. Eastman recalled:

*It was quickly discovered that in order to secure the general attendance of the American [English speaking] portion of the community the old church in the Spanish quarter would have to be given up and a new church erected in a locality that would be of more easy access. At a meeting of the congregation held in the old mission house or parsonage, attended by eight persons, none blessed with any great worldly store, it was resolved that we proceed to build a new church somewhere in the new town. A committee was appointed to select a location with power to purchase lots. The committee selected and negotiated for two lots (for \$200) lying some two blocks east of the present church site i.e. on the (Northwest) corner of Eighth Street and Douglas Avenue.*

*A public dinner was given in the Mission Church and school room, which was very successful and from the proceeds \$150 was paid on the purchase...The ladies of the congregation organized a ladies society for this work, and this society soon, by diligence and thrift, paid the balance due on the lots. Later on, some objections were discovered to the lots that had been purchased. Through negotiations with Mr. Jefferson Raynolds, president of the (original) First National Bank of Las Vegas, and*

*with a most generous contribution on his part, the more desirable and more valuable lots were purchased on which the new church was subsequently erected.*

*Raynolds served as elder of our church from 1887 until 1920, a year before he died in 1921, thirty-three years in all.*

*A subscription paper was circulated which was responded to by citizens in general, being headed by seven one-hundred-dollar subscriptions. When the subscriptions reached \$1,500, the Board of Church Erections voted to appropriate an additional one thousand dollars...*

*After discussion of the situation it was resolved to erect a frame building on the foundation. (The original church in Old Town was built of adobe bricks). There was no contract let, but B. B. Borden superintended the work, and carpenters were employed by the day. The money subscribed was paid to the workers--and the work appeared to be executed in a workmanlike manner. By the first of October 1881 the new church was ready for dedication.*

*The day of the dedication services was set for 6 October 1881. Rev. W. C. Roberts, secretary of the Board of Home Missions, then anticipating a tour among the mission churches of the Rocky Mountains, agreed to preach the dedicatory sermon.*

*A program of the dedicatory service was printed, and the service was held, all local pastors participating. Dr. Roberts failed to arrive in time for the occasion, and I stood in the gap, and preached the sermon, mainly an extemporaneous effort. I was wonderfully inspired by the large audience, and by my contact with the work from its inception, and I now look back on that day as one of the notable days of my ministry. The text was Matthew 13:31--the Kingdom of Heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, etc., theme of the discourse being "Growth, the inevitable outcome of spiritual Sowing."*

*Before the dedicatory prayer, Professor Robertson made a report of the building committee's work which showed a shortage of \$605. A call for this sum was made from the audience, and in a few minutes a willing response brought in a figure of \$650 and the house was dedicated free of debt!*

*A year later, an excursion over the Santa Fe and Mexican Railroad to the end of the line, then at Chihuahua, was undertaken and about \$1000 was cleared by the enterprise. This provided pews and paid other expenses. I think that when we counted up the outlays for lots, materials, labor, furnishing, etc., the total expenditure was something over \$6000.*

*The cause of the church during all the building period was gradually gaining ground. Our roll of five members grew to forty members. The salary that had been at first wholly paid by the Home Mission Board had a contribution by the congregation in the second year of \$300.*

*The Mission School was revived and Miss Madeline Bratton of Little Rock, Arkansas, was placed in charge. A scourge of smallpox, however, kept it closed much of our last year. I had the oversight of the mission schools in Las Vegas, El Rito, Agua Negra, Anton Chico and Glorieta.*



In another letter to Rev. Norman Skinner, dated 28 January 1897, John Eastman wrote:

*When I came into the charge of the Las Vegas church, no documents of any kind pertaining to the church were placed in my hands. If a statement on the breaking of the ground, and the organization of the church had ever been written, it was not deposited in the keeping of the congregation. If any Session Books or minutes of the proceedings of the Session had been kept I do not now remember to have seen it... When Mr. Annin took his departure, the church had almost wholly vanished--there was no elder or deacon to deposit the records and archives with. As to the church organization, I will say that the church to which I ministered was not another church from that organized by brother Annin. It was the same church, and it embodies all of the membership that was to be found in Las Vegas in June 1880, when I arrived in the field...*

*When the new church was erected in the New Town it did not create two organizations, but it was one historic church of Las Vegas with two church buildings. The matter of the church bell and of the pulpit Bible...were therefore the property of the church; and the church was at liberty to leave them in the old building, or to sell them, or to remove them to the new and more accessible sanctuary...*

*As to the old building, the church continued to keep it in repair in order to organize later a separate church organization of Spanish people, whom it was hoped we might gather from the population round about. We had discovered that American and Spanish would not coalesce. We had no Spanish members at all when I arrived, or during my time there, but we continued the Mission School, under Mrs. M. H. Patten, in the school room in the old church building and we had Brother Vargas, a Mexican licentiate, commissioned to preach as a missionary without an organization, in the old church building. This plan was followed up by my successor, and later on, a new parish church was organized, and they worshipped in the old church. . .*

*The expense of the house, adjoining the old church was a burden to me. The teachers of Mr. Annin's time were departed (the school was discontinued), the house was growing dilapidated with each season. I rented the rooms and the rents of all except the three or four rooms allotted by the Women's Board to my family were consumed in repairs. The work done continually in putting on roofs, buildings chimneys, plastering, painting, papering. etc., used up the rents and drew beyond that on my limited salary. During my last year I received the donation of a lot adjoining our new church, from the congregation and with a little fund of a few hundred dollars received from my mother that spring, and a little credit at Lockhart and Company I built the little cottage next to the church. That little cottage was very pretty in its delicate coat of pea green when it was new; and it was the only landed estate I ever possessed. But I lived in it only six months. My health was so precarious in the fall that I removed to California...*

Rev. Eastman had a health problem that caused him to leave Las Vegas in November of 1882 for a church in Colusa, California, where he served eight years. In 1890 he moved to a church in San Luis Obispo California. He died on 29 April 1900.

His son, Robert, studied at Hanover College, his father's alma mater, from 1892 to 1896, and later also entered the ministry. In 1917, Rev.

Norman Skinner reported that Robert Eastman was then the pastor of Knox Presbyterian Church in Berkeley, California.

Presbyterians in Las Vegas are not only indebted to John Calvin Eastman for the construction of the Douglas Avenue church building but also for the building and financing of the cottage next door. His impact on this congregation is therefore much greater than his short tenure as pastor would indicate.

This biography is adapted from *Preparing the Way*, by J. A. Schufle, Presbyterian Church, Las Vegas, New Mexico, 1970.

J. A. Schufle and Dale B. Gerdeman 1993

## REVEREND JAMES FRASER

***James Fraser spoke French, German, Italian, Spanish and English with comparative ease. He read the Bible in eleven languages. Because of his linguistic ability, some of his associates urged him to go to the Southwest and work among the Spanish-speaking people of New Mexico.***

*James Fraser was born 8 December 1837 to Alexander Fraser and his wife in Dowelly Parish in Dunkeld, Scotland. In the village of Guy his father was master foreman for the estate of the Duke of Atholl, and as a child, James was "herd boy" of that estate.*

*The family had heard a great deal about the opportunities in America, so they sailed for the New World in 1852, spending six weeks in the vessel. There were other Scottish families on the vessel, and they became friends. Some were going to Mansfield, Ohio, and others to Collingswood, Ontario (Simco County). The Frasers first went to Ohio, then in 1855 to Ontario.*

*The father and his oldest son, Mungo, worked as contractors and builders. James staked out a "homestead" in Proton Township, near Dundalk, Ontario. Mungo later became Rev. Mungo Fraser, D.O. of Hamilton, Ontario. (Fraser n.d.)*

Fraser married in Canada and had a son, Laird. After Mrs. Fraser died, Laird stayed with his mother's family.

*As a young man, James taught school near Brampton, Ontario, for several terms. He had a desire to become a minister, so he entered Knox College in Toronto. He took two years of study in the theological department, graduating in 1869, and then went to Princeton, New Jersey, for his final year, graduating in the class of 1872. He was ordained by the Presbytery of Chester and took his first church in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania.*

*After three years as Pastor in Kennett, his health broke, and he went abroad to visit his old home in Scotland and to travel through Europe, Asia and the northern shore of Africa. When he returned to the United States, the church at Kennett Square urged him to return and become their pastor, which he did. He married the organist of the Sabbath School. (Fraser n.d.)*

Fraser held three degrees: doctor of philosophy from Syracuse University, doctor of law from Washington College, and doctor of divinity of his own institution--New Windsor College.

He moved to the First Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas, New Mexico, on 1 June 1883 and was installed as pastor on 14 October 1884. He was greatly concerned about the abandoned school and church in West Las Vegas. In 1884, he reorganized the Spanish church, using the original adobe building. Largely through his efforts, the Mission School was reestablished and expanded into the Las Vegas Boarding School. He and his second wife Ella McFarlan Fraser sent for her girlhood chum, Anna Mary

Speakman, who arrived and took charge as principal from 1884 to 1891. Fraser arranged for the evangelist John Whitlock to preach at the Spanish church and devote a part of his time working at the Mission School with Miss Speakman.

Fraser resigned as pastor in 1888, then served as superintendent of the Spanish-speaking area, covering the northern section of Arizona and New Mexico and the southern edge of Colorado, visiting the remote sections, establishing schools and holding church services wherever possible. He continued this work until 1889. In an effort to gain support for schools in places he believed they would be most effective, he published articles in *Home Mission Monthly*. In January 1888, May 1889 and January 1890, he wrote about opportunities available to Presbyterians in establishing schools.

New Mexico Presbyterians were a part of the Synod of Colorado until growth made it apparent that a Synod was needed in New Mexico. The first meeting was held in Albuquerque in October 1889, and Fraser was unanimously elected moderator. Isaac T. Whittemore served as “stated clerk.” Years later while living in Maryland, Fraser wrote a letter to the newly formed Synod of New Mexico fondly recalling the events of that first meeting:

*It is with special pleasure that I learn of the meeting of our Synod this fall in Albuquerque, and how I wish I could be with you! It is just fifteen years this month, since a few of us met in Albuquerque to organize this Synod. The year previous, we were authorized by the Synod of Colorado to take this step. Many of us were sorry to part company with the good Brethren of the great Synod of the North. But as we felt that the growing demands of our church in the valley and of all the Rio Grande, that through the great stretches of Arizona imperatively called for this new departure, as loyal followers of Him who, “though he was rich for our sakes became poor.” We at once, without hesitation, assumed the responsibilities that the call of duty laid upon us. And at the appointed time after due notice, we met in Albuquerque; and in the most regular manner, according to our book, the Synod of New Mexico was organized. The present writer was unanimously elected Moderator, an honor that he will always esteem, with the highest pleasure as a prominent event in his life. Our late esteemed brother, Isaac T. Whittemore was elected stated clerk. (The book of Order defines the role of the clerk, “The clerk shall record the transactions of the governing body, keep its rolls of membership and attendance, preserve the records carefully...”), an office that he filled with tact and ability. I remember also a very pleasant feature of the new organization was the presentation of a novel and characteristic gavel, by the late James Menaul. This gavel was quite unique and was suggestive of the early days of the valley of the Rio Grande and also of the advent of our beloved Presbyterian church in that same valley.*

*I can only add further, that all the business of the Synod was dispatched with courtesy and good order. When the docket was covered, the first meeting of the Synod of New Mexico brought its Session to a close with every member so drawn to the other that we could say: “Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.” I send you and every member of the Synod this year, my most cordial greetings. May the spirit of the Master be present in all your Sessions, and the Spirit*

*of our God rule in all your hearts. May all your deliberations be such as to lengthen the cords and strengthen the stakes of our beloved Zion in all the great West.*

*Most cordially yours, James Fraser (Fraser 1905)*

In 1889, because of serious illness in Mrs. Fraser's family, they moved back East and settled in Maryland. Mrs. Fraser's father, Joseph McFarlan, died shortly after their return.

*For a time Fraser was pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Havre de Grace, and then at Sparrows Point, both near Baltimore, when in 1895 he accepted a position as professor of ancient languages in New Windsor College (the only Presbyterian College in the State of Maryland.) Later there was a change in the faculty, and Dr. Fraser became the president of this institution while he remained on the faculty as a teacher of languages.*

*In 1913, Fraser and his family again went to Europe, visiting scenes of his childhood and attending the Seventh World's Sabbath School Convention in Zurich, Switzerland. Because of his familiarity with the languages of the land, he became a guide for several parties in France, Germany and in Italy--not taking them on any conducted tour, simply assisting them to find their way when they became bewildered. Because of his personal contact with other lands, he was frequently called upon for travelogues, special addresses and sermons. At the time of his death several folks from Baltimore said, "Dr. Fraser is one of the best known and most beloved ministers in the entire state of Maryland." (Fraser n.d.)*

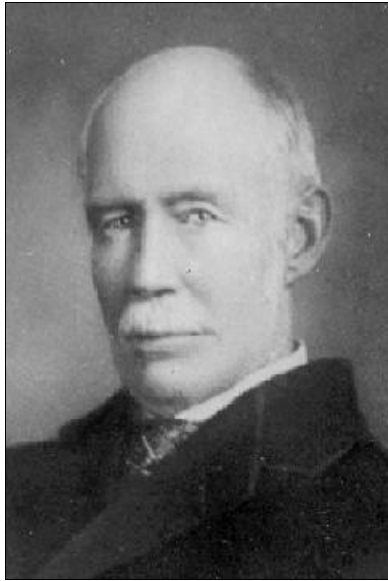
The Frasers had four boys. Two were born in Chester County, Pennsylvania and died young. The two born in New Mexico married and had their own families. J. Wallace Fraser became a minister. Mrs. Fraser died on 19 January 1919. Dr. Fraser married his third wife, Minnie, in about 1925. He died on 10 December 1927.

Dale B. Gerdeman 1988

# JEFFERSON RAYNOLDS

***Jefferson Raynolds became one of the foremost financiers of the Southwest. He was elected to the Presbyterian Session on ten separate occasions and taught Sunday Adult Bible class.***

Jefferson Raynolds was born in Canton, Ohio, on 26 October 1843, the son of James Madison Raynolds and Sarah M. (Slusser) Raynolds. He was one of seven boys. In his youth he was an intimate friend of William McKinley, who later became President of the United States. When Jefferson was 17 he enlisted as a private in Company F, Fourth Ohio Volunteer Infantry, and participated in a number of battles during the Civil War. He was removed from active duty by reason of disability. Upon recovery he became a hospital nurse and later, a clerk in the War Department. He mustered out with the rank of second lieutenant.



After the war Raynolds became a clerk in the First National Bank of Canton, Ohio, and in 1866 went to work as a bookkeeper in the Colorado National Bank in Denver. Later he moved to Pueblo, where he formed a partnership with M. Thatcher and organized the First National Bank, becoming the cashier.

He married Martha E. Cowan in Pueblo on 17 May 1871. She was originally from Fairfield, Iowa. In 1876, they moved to Las Vegas, New Mexico. On

12 November 1879 he and his brothers, Joshua S. Raynolds and Frederick A. Raynolds, under the name Raynolds Brothers, organized a private bank, the First National Bank of Las Vegas, with a capital stock of \$50,000

**Jefferson** located on the West side of the plaza. (The current First National Bank in Las Vegas was organized in

1949.) Jefferson Raynolds was the first president of the bank. In 1903, the First National Bank of Las Vegas was moved east of the Gallinas River to "new town." He erected many business buildings in Las Vegas.

On 24 December 1881 Jefferson Raynolds and others incorporated the Central Bank of Albuquerque, which institution later merged with The First National Bank of Albuquerque. With the merger, Joshua S. Raynolds became president.

In company with his brother Joshua, Jefferson organized the First National Bank of El Paso, Texas, in 1882.

The Raynolds were the parents of three sons: twins Hallet and Edward David, and James Wallace, who was appointed Secretary of the

Territory of New Mexico by President McKinley. James Wallace Raynolds arranged for George A. Fleming to come to New Mexico as his secretary. Mr. Fleming, his wife, and his daughter, Evelyn, and her husband, Noble M. Irish, were prominent and active members of the First Presbyterian Church for many years.

On 4 July 1879 the first train of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway arrived in Las Vegas. There was a prairie about a mile wide between the tracks and the town. New settlers poured into town. Business boomed and the new settlers were soon joined by "Wild West" characters. The prairie area was laid out into a new town. The new settlers flourished but so did gamblers, gun fighters and a host of others.

By July 1880 Las Vegas was a bustling town of 1,500. A notice was posted that read:

**NOTICE!**  
TO THIEVES, THUGS, FAKIRS  
AND BUNKO-STEERERS,  
Among Whom Are  
J.J. HARLIN, alias "OFF WHEELER;" SAW DUST  
CHARLIE, WM. HEDGES, BILLY THE KID,  
Billy Mullin, Little Jack, The  
Cuter, Pock-Marked Kid, and  
about Twenty Others:  
If found within the limits of this City  
after TEN O'CLOCK P.M., this Night, you will be invited to attend a  
**GRAND NECKTIE PARTY.**  
The Expense of which will be borne by 100 Substantial Citizens.  
Las Vegas, March 24, 1881

A windmill in the old town plaza pumped water for the town well. Crossbeams on the windmill were used for hanging.

When Rev. John Eastman moved to Las Vegas on 11 June 1880 and found only five members of the Presbyterian Church on Chavez Street, he and the two Session members came to the conclusion that a church should be built in the new part of town in order to secure the general attendance of the newcomers. A committee was appointed to find lots for a new church and was authorized to arrange the purchase. The lots were selected, and a partial payment was made. Later on, some objections were discovered to the lots and Jefferson Raynolds, president of the bank, with a most generous donation on his part, arranged for more desirable and more valuable lots to

be purchased. The church was built on these lots and dedicated on 16 October 1881.

In 1882, Mr. Raynolds organized the Agua Pura Company of Las Vegas. He was elected its president and floated the company's bonds. This company established a gravity water supply system for Las Vegas, drawing its supply from the Gallinas Canyon, six miles from Las Vegas. In 1883, he assisted prominently in the organization of the Mutual Building and Loan Association of Las Vegas.

Mr. and Mrs. Jefferson Raynolds joined the First Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas on 5 January 1884 and remained members until their deaths.

*The Session reorganized itself on a regular rotating basis as soon as Mr. Skinner became pastor. Elders were Jefferson Raynolds, C. A. Thayer, Hugh Loudon and F. H. Pierce during Mr. Skinner's first year...Elder Thayer died on 28 November 1893 and the Session remained at the level of three elders plus the pastor for five years. In 1898, it was increased to five elders, Jefferson Raynolds, Herbert O. Milligan, Louis H. Hofmeister, F. H. Pierce and Hugh Loudon. (Schufle 1970, 32)*

In September 1913 the church finances had reached a hand-to-mouth existence and Elder Raynolds requested the pastor to give a sermon on "Giving to the Lord." The Session agreed to get out a full membership to hear it.

There were good years and difficult, trying years. (See *Preparing the Way* pp. 42, 43, 48, 58, 60 and 61 for additional insight about the leadership of the early First Presbyterian Church and the important role played by Raynolds.)

Raynolds donated a beautiful painting to the sanctuary depicting Joseph leading a donkey carrying Mary and the Christ Child. The brass plate attached to the picture says, "Brought from Florence, Italy, in 1904."

He contracted pneumonia, suffered from its effects for many months, and after an operation to relieve him, died in El Paso on 21 September 1921. His wife, Martha, preceded him in death in 1919. His funeral service was in Las Vegas, and his obituary reads:

*BEAUTIFUL TRIBUTE IS PAID TO LATE JEFFERSON RAYNOLDS*

*By faith he became a sojourner in the land of promise--for he looked for a city which had foundations whose builder and Maker is God. With the above as a text from the 11th chapter of Corinthians, Rev. Roderick C. Jackson, pastor of the Presbyterian Church yesterday afternoon paid high tribute to the life and usefulness of the late Jefferson Raynolds, whose death occurred in El Paso Monday.*

*The church was filled to capacity at the hour of the funeral at 3:30 yesterday afternoon, and among the faces present were to be discerned those of nearly all the surviving members of the Las Vegas pioneer colony. They came to pay their last earthly respects to one of them who had made fame and fortune, who had won respect and esteem among them.*



*Rev. Jackson pointed out that such a life of faith as the deceased lends dignity and worth to the person living it, ennobles all its purposes and actions and when the tasks of life are over, gives promise of peace and praise.*

*Pall-bearers were Hugh Loudon, J. H. Stearns, Louis Ilfeld, W. J. Lucas, William E. Gortner and Charles Trumbull.*

*Interment was in the Masonic cemetery. (Las Vegas Daily Optic 1921)*

Dale B. Gerdeman 1986

**Sources:**

Schufle, Dr. J. A., *Preparing the Way*.

Stanley, Father, *The Las Vegas Story*.

*Las Vegas Daily Optic*, Sept. 22, 1921.

## JOSHUA SAXTON RAYNOLDS

***Joshua Saxton Reynolds was Jefferson Reynolds' younger brother. His wife and children were members of the First Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas. Although Reynolds himself was not a member, he contributed to the musical heritage of the Church by donating a new pipe organ in 1898.***

Joshua Saxton Reynolds was born New Year's Eve, 1845, in Canton, Ohio, to James Madison Reynolds and Sarah M. Slusser. He was the fourth of seven boys. He graduated from the public schools in Canton and attended the University of Michigan.

Joshua, three of his brothers, and one adopted brother served with distinction during the Civil War. He attained a rank of sergeant despite his youth.

Joshua's first job in a bank was in Canton. Later he went to Omaha, where he was employed by the Kuntz Brothers Bank.



On 7 September 1869 Joshua married Sarah Ann Robbins in Canton. She was born in Philadelphia on 12 December 1846 the daughter of John Robbins, a woolen manufacturer of Kingswood, England, and Martha M. (Marshall) Robbins of New Mill, England. Soon after their marriage, the Reynolds moved to Central City, Colorado. They traveled West by train to Omaha, which was as far as the train-rails had been built, and the remaining distance by covered wagon. He went to work for the Rocky Mountain National

Bank.

**Joshua** In 1876 Joshua's brother Jefferson moved to Las Vegas, New Mexico, and opened the Reynolds Brothers Bank. On 12 November 1879 the bank changed its charter and name to the First National Bank of Las Vegas. It was located on the old town Plaza in West Las Vegas, and later moved to the new part of town on the east side of the Gallinas River. In 1882 Joshua, his wife Sarah Ann, and their four young children moved to Las Vegas where he joined Jefferson in the banking business. Because of the banks' original name, we can assume that he had a financial interest in the bank from its inception.

Albert Harris Reynolds, the third brother of the Reynolds family, established the first territorial banks in New Mexico. All three were well known in Las Vegas.

The pipe organ that Joshua S. Reynolds donated to the Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas in 1898 was used until it was replaced in 1960.

*He also gave a pipe organ to First Presbyterian in Albuquerque in 1905. This instrument later served Immanuel and La Mesa Presbyterian Churches in Albuquerque, and at present is stored at Menaul School... He donated the land at the corner of Edith and Central Avenue in Albuquerque for the City's public library. (Curro 1997)*

*A third organ which is of the same vintage is now in the St. Francis Auditorium of the Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe and is still used for regular concerts. (Warren 1986)*

Joshua Raynolds was identified with financial interests in El Paso from 1882. In 1885 he moved to Albuquerque and became associated with the Central bank that later consolidated with the First National Bank of Albuquerque. About this time, he and Jefferson also organized the First National Bank at El Paso. Joshua was active in the Albuquerque bank until 1900, and in that year went to El Paso. He returned to Albuquerque in about 1915. He served as president of the First National Bank in Albuquerque and the First National Bank in El Paso. He retired from the El Paso bank on 14 January 1930.

*He was successful for the greater part of his life, but suffered severe setbacks in the Great Depression. (Curro 1997)*

Mr. Raynolds was a man of faith.

*In letters to Ruth as a young music student in Boston and as a young mother in Las Vegas, Joshua reveals himself to be a tender and devoted father. He called her "Rufus" and signed himself "Pater" or "Pop." He teased her about her stubbornness and cajoled her to pursue her violin and sketching studies. When she suffered the tragedy of losing an infant daughter, he counseled her tenderly yet sternly, "not to give way too much to grief...we must not permit ourselves to grieve over the acts of Him who is omniscient."*

*He reminded her of the untimely death of President McKinley and of the many unpredictable circumstances that surround any such event.*

*To his family he exhibited a lively sense of humor and evident joie de vivre. He and Sarah (whom he called Sallie) loved to travel, read and climb mountains. He studied French and played the flute. But evidently, he was a very private person, shunning public attention of any kind. His children had to cajole him to have his picture taken...*

*Letters toward the end of his life reveal a philosophical outlook and deepening faith as he approached the end. He writes to his brother Albert, "What is your opinion of your future state? If in God's goodness we are permitted to live again do we appear as little children of whom Christ said 'of such is the kingdom of Heaven' and may we not as children be pure and jolly fit to stay in Heaven? Would like to think of myself as a child, all my sins, evil desires, ambitions, greed, envy, malice, pain, sickness and fear sloughed off and I a child in my mother's arms. Seems to me that it worth hoping for." Some months later he wrote Albert, "Introspection is good for the soul but despondency is not and you should remember Jeff's (Jefferson Raynolds) old saying, "Never give up... while there is life there is hope." He concludes, "Our mother and*

*father we hope are in Heaven and when the time comes for us to die may we again meet with them is my prayer." He died only a few months later... (Curro 1997)*

At one time Joshua was known as one of the wealthiest men in the Southwest, and was known as the J. P. Morgan of the area. When his family arrived in Las Vegas in 1882, he purchased two lots for a home he planned to build. In 1883 he purchased an additional four lots, and the construction of their magnificent seventeen room mansion began. In 1907 Mrs. Raynolds' brother, John Robbins and his family lived in the home. He owned and operated a large wool-scouring plant in Las Vegas.

*Sarah Raynolds Drake sold the family's seventeen room mansion to Hollis Wingo in 1935. It was used as a boarding house. There were no major changes made to the building while they owned it. In 1939 Bob Phillips bought the mansion and the Phillips family lived there almost sixteen years. It had been sadly neglected and required an enormous amount of restoration. But year by year, the beautiful building was put in good condition and made a wonderful home for the Phillips. In 1955 the [New Mexico Highlands] University exercising the "right of eminent domain" forced the Phillips to sell the property to them. (Phillips 1990)*

The University wanted the land for a future science building.

Mrs. Joshua Raynolds and her children were active members of the First Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas. The children of Joshua Saxton Raynolds and Martha M. Raynolds were listed by Mrs. Martha McNary Chilcote in correspondence with the author in May 1990:

*Ruth Raynolds, born in Central City, Colorado on 13 July 1870, married James Graham McNary in Las Vegas, New Mexico on 8 October 1902. Kate Saxton Raynolds, born on 10 November 1872, married Dudley Stuart Dean, Cohasset, Massachusetts. Herbert Frederick Raynolds, born 28 November 1875, married Bernice Shipman. He was a Chief Justice of Supreme Court of New Mexico. John Madison (Jack) Raynolds was born in Central City, Colorado, on 18 June 1878. He lived in Las Vegas for a time and later moved to Albuquerque, where he was president of the First National Bank of Albuquerque. Sarah Mae (Sallie) Raynolds married Martin E. Drake and lived in Plandome, Long Island, New York. (Chilcote 1990)*

James Graham McNary, husband of Ruth Raynolds, came from Tarkio, Missouri, to teach as a member of the first faculty of the New Mexico Normal University under President Dr. Edgar L. Hewett. In 1903 Dr. Hewett and all the faculty of the Normal School, including James Graham McNary, resigned.

Mr. McNary became Superintendent of the Sunday school of the First Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas for three years, 1903-1905. In 1903 James and Ruth McNary moved into the Raynolds' mansion, and he became editor of the *Las Vegas Daily Optic*. In 1907 the McNary family moved to El Paso.

On 2 November 1932 at the age of 87 Joshua died at the home of his daughter Sarah "Sallie" Drake in Plandome, Long Island, New York. Funeral services were held in Canton, his birthplace. He was buried in the Westlawn Cemetery near the grave of childhood friend President McKinley.

Sarah Ann Reynolds, wife of Joshua S. Reynolds, died at the home of her youngest daughter, Sarah "Sallie" Drake, in Manhasset, New York. She was buried next to her husband's grave in Canton. (*Las Vegas Daily Optic* 27 Nov 1933).

Dale B. Gerdeman 1996

## HUGH LOUDON

***A very thrifty Scotsman, Hugh Loudon could open safes for people who had lost the combinations. He was an excellent violinist and often played the organ when the regular organist was ill. A devout and active member of the First Presbyterian Church he read his Bible daily and knelt in prayer morning and night every day of his life, according to his niece. He died at age 107.***

Hugh Loudon was born in Scotland on 3 January 1858 and immigrated to New Mexico in March 1884. His bride-to-be, Elizabeth, arrived in 1890. An accountant, he was employed by the Scottish Mortgage and Land Investment Company to investigate the honesty of the operators of their La Cueva Ranch property. His investigation resulted in the firing of the manager. The manager's job was offered to Hugh, and he accepted.



Eventually, the company sold the ranch to a Mr. Dueal of Scotland, who continued to live in Scotland but visited occasionally. Mr. Dueal is remembered as a finely dressed man of aristocratic bearing, who apparently did not need a cane, but used one, nevertheless. He offered Hugh a part ownership to remain as manager. Hugh and his wife Elizabeth lived at the ranch until Mr. Dueal's death, when the ranch was sold. They moved to nearby Las Vegas, where Hugh invested his money in mortgages.

Within days of his arrival in Las Vegas on 29 March 1884 Hugh Loudon joined the First Presbyterian Church. He wrote a paper entitled, "Church Recollections" which he delivered at the annual meeting of the church in 1897. In it he described the early church in Las Vegas. A copy of this record can be found in *Preparing the Way* by J. A. Schufle, pp 35-37.

**Hugh Loudon**

On 25 September 1892 Mr. Loudon was elected elder of the church, and was regularly re-elected for nearly 20 years. The old records attest to his active participation in church affairs. He served as a delegate to Presbytery and sang in the choir whenever enough other singers were present. Tragically, Hugh's wife and infant son died in 1895, and their bodies were laid to rest in Scotland. Hugh dedicated a stained-glass window in the First Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas to their memory.

Hugh prospered, yet it was his nature to be frugal. Mrs. Helen Hoffman of Kansas City recalled Hugh Loudon's great concern for her welfare as the niece of one of his close friends. After moving to a nearby

town, she received weekly letters from Hugh, deploring her "hand-to-mouth existence" (on \$50 a month) and wishing he could help. She wrote:

*At last a letter arrived with the news he was driving over to see me and bring me some "help" the following Sunday. I could hardly wait! My benefactor arrived in a flurry of excitement and exhaust fumes per schedule, and I ushered him in, where a hearty meal with his favorite dishes was steaming on the stove. Although he was in his eighties, he took three helpings of everything and polished it off with a big slab of apple pie. Then--reaching for his overcoat and making for the door he handed me a small parcel with a conspiratorial twinkle in his cold blue eyes as he said, "My dear, you will realize that I have your interest at heart and hope my little gift will bring you the prosperity you deserve, but you mustn't open it till I have gone. I want no thanks, you see."*

*Breathlessly, I tore open the surprise bonanza, and I could not believe my eyes nor my "luck." For wrapped tightly in white tissue with a gold ribbon bow was a WISHBONE! No white meat thereon--for a "bonny, bony, lassie"--as it were! (Modrall 1974, 81)*

*On one Sabbath morning, while ringing the heavy bell, Elder Loudon awkwardly looped the rope around his neck and was swung off the floor but came down with no serious mishap. At about this time, an ordinarily happy-go-lucky, good natured Indian boy had been drinking, and while riding hilariously down the street, threw his lasso over the head of another elder, and dragged him for some distance before the Indian's mad ride was stopped. This elder, too, was practically unhurt, so the word went abroad that it is impossible to hang a Presbyterian elder. (Blake 1932, 55)*

Another humorous story was told to the author:

Owen and Deborah Shillinglaw often visited Hugh and recall a time when he was in his late nineties living in Albuquerque. When Father Stanley's book *The Las Vegas (New Mexico) Story* was republished in 1951, they thought it would be an opportunity to obtain some wonderful historical additions to the book and asked Hugh to read it and note his corrections and comments directly in their copy. Hugh returned the book unmarked because:

- (1) If he marked it, the postage for returning it would be first class.
- (2) He did not want to lay himself open to any controversy or libel suit.

Hugh was an interesting storyteller who vividly described the recollections of his early days. He was a prime source of historical data but refused to allow his stories to be tape-recorded. One of his stories was about the day that Fort Union was abandoned. The owners of the adjoining ranch had just rounded up their cattle, and when the army band with its glittering instruments and loud playing marched out of the Fort, it spooked the cattle. Hugh reported that it took weeks to round up the cattle again.

During the time he was managing the ranch, he stocked the lake with carp. He would go to Albuquerque to pick up the fish and haul them back in

milk cans, stopping at each stream along the way to add fresh water. He was fond of telling about how he would swim to the middle of the lake with the milk cans to release the fish.

Many Las Vegans who may not have known Hugh personally remembered him in his automobile. It was a magnificent, always highly polished 1914 Oldsmobile in perfect condition. It was a memorable sight when he occasionally drove around town.

In his last years, he lived with a niece and her family in Albuquerque. They had his Oldsmobile on blocks in the garage, and the niece's family had to leave their car in the driveway out in the weather. His antique car was undoubtedly quite valuable when his estate was settled.

In Dale Gerdeman's early years, he was interested in coin collecting and had heard that Hugh Loudon had an extremely rare U.S.\$4 gold piece. Gerdeman thought it would be interesting to visit him and have the opportunity to see the rare coin. Hugh was more than 100 years old at the time and knew Dale worked in the bank, so he wanted to talk about his experiences opening safes for people who had lost their combinations. Hugh said he was known as the only honest safe cracker in the territory. Hugh related one experience after another, and Dale began to realize he was going to talk through the whole visit. Dale kept coming back to the subject of the coin but Hugh was intent on talking about breaking into safes, and had no intention of changing the subject. Not the slightest hint was given as to whether or not he had such a coin. Based on conversations with his heirs after Hugh's death, Dale found Hugh did not own a \$4 gold piece.

Hugh never became a U.S. citizen and always felt that the income tax was unconstitutional. As he grew older, his niece became concerned that he wasn't paying his taxes and requested that his lawyer, Dick Modrall, inquire. Modrall found out that it was true and had the difficult task of persuading Hugh to pay his back taxes and his current ones. The thrifty Scotsman did so but had the last word: "Dick, you know the income tax is unconstitutional; why don't you prove that to those people in Washington?"

Hugh Loudon died on 3 January 1965. He left a sizeable bequest to the church in his will. His niece, Mrs. George F. Mitchell, accompanied his body back to Scotland for burial beside his wife and infant son.

Dale B. Gerdeman 1985



## REVEREND NORMAN N. SKINNER

***In late February 1892, Reverend F. S. Brush, feeling the need to settle his family in a lower altitude, informed the Session of the First Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas of his decision to leave. Rev. Norman Newton Skinner became the next pastor. It was the beginning of an association that would endure for 27 fruitful years.***

Rev. Norman Skinner of Santa Fe was initially asked to fill the Las Vegas pulpit on a supply basis from April to July 1892. He preached his first sermon there on 17 April, and his scholarly and well-referenced remarks endeared him to the congregation. On 1 October 1892 Elder Hugh Loudon traveled the poor road to El Rito Church in Chacón where presbytery was in Session and delivered the call from the Las Vegas congregation to the acting moderator. On 15 October 1892 the Session and congregation called Mr. Skinner to become the pastor. He was delighted to accept and became one of the best-known and highly esteemed pastors in the entire Southwest.



Skinner

elders. Besides Mr. Loudon, were Mr. Jefferson Reynolds, C. A. Thayer and F. H. Pierce. Mr. Thayer died in 1893 and the three men served without a replacement for him until 1898, when they were joined by Herbert O. Milligan and Louis H. Hofmeister. A sixth elder, Frank Carroon, president of New Mexico Normal University (now Highlands University), was elected elder in 1911 and served for a period of eighteen years.

The congregation's erudite pastor attracted prominent men of higher learning into membership. George Fleming, a highly regarded businessman, joined the church in 1905, drawn as were others by Skinner's deep and penetrating messages. New Mexico Normal University's Dr. Edgar Lee Hewett and his wife Clara joined as did Miss Wilmatte Porter, first professor of biology and chemistry there, and highly regarded Professor Theodore D. A. Cockerell, director of the New Mexico Biological Station, and later professor of biology.

On 19 June 1900 Miss Porter and Professor Cockerell were married by Rev. Skinner. Cockerell became one of the world's great authorities on bees and once lectured at the church on the topic, "Religious Doctrine from Standpoint of Science."

Rev. Skinner had an appeal to persons from many walks of life. He commonly received new members who had come directly from Europe (England, Germany, Scotland, and Ireland) as well as Asia. He had inherited from his predecessor a Chinese Sabbath School organized for the benefit of immigrant railroad workmen who stayed in the area for about three years. Minutes of the Session for 8 April 1894 show that the church members were diligent in serving as teachers for the immigrants. In 1894 an addition to the church was completed to provide space for Sunday school and social activities. A pipe organ and steam heating plant were installed.

Rev. Skinner was very active in the presbytery and synod. A directory he prepared for the congregation's 15th anniversary lists the names of fifteen female teachers in the mission schools associated with the church. (Only one was married, as marriage was thought to be a negative distraction from one's calling!) Santa Fe Presbytery, in which Rev. Skinner held membership, was involved in the organizing and operation of many such schools throughout northern New Mexico. He served at one time as chairman of the home missions committee, charged with all those schools and small mountain churches, which were not self-supporting. He gave himself whole-heartedly to this work, rendering clear and sane judgments.

Short of stature, but with seemingly boundless energy, Skinner applied himself with extraordinary zeal. The annual report for 1893 shows a membership of 83 and budgeted income exceeding \$3,000. By the time of his retirement, membership had nearly doubled and giving was up fifty percent.

*Professions of faith for new members were more than just a formality. Persons wishing to join were questioned about their beliefs in a searching manner. (Schufle 1970, 60)*

Some were found wanting and made to feel that the decision for Christ's cause should at least be delayed until he or she were better prepared. The stern quality and severe tone of the Presbyterian Church of the late 19th Century is evident in a quote from the records for 7 December 1892:

*Application for use of church building for meeting of the school Territorial Union was refused for the reason that the Session held that the building was dedicated and consecrated for sacred services only. (Schufle, 1970, 56)*

An example Rev. Skinner's sound business practices and demanding Scottish ethics is found in the records of the Session for 3 April 1895. He recommended that the church withhold per capita payments assessed by presbytery until neighboring churches, reportedly in arrears, paid theirs. When the treasurer of presbytery, Rev. A. McIntyre, was able to report that

no other church was delinquent, then Mr. Pierce, Clerk of Session, was instructed to forward the Las Vegas monies withheld.

Rev. Skinner once led the congregation to petition the presbytery to send an overture to the general assembly which would forbid the various boards of the church to incur indebtedness in the pursuit of their work.

Church minutes for 2 July 1911 show how the Pastor and Session refused to dismiss one member who requested transfer to a Christian Science congregation, considering its doctrine to be unsound. The member asked then that, instead, his name be dropped from the roll and this was done.

The careful record keeping itself is a further indication of Skinner's diligence. A fine historical account of the early work of the Presbyterian Church in New Mexico is preserved for us in the form of correspondence between Rev. Skinner and such colleagues as John Annin, José Yñés Perea, John Eastman and James Fraser.

These were the roots of this very extraordinary pastor and servant of the Church: His father, Albert Gallatin Skinner, had a large medical practice in Youngstown. The family was of old northeastern European stock, its ancestors having arrived on the coast in 1658. Norman was born in Youngstown, New York, on 14 January 1858. He attended Lockport High School and graduated from Hamilton College in 1883. He received a Bachelor of Divinity degree from Union Theological Seminary in 1886, having been considered a student of outstanding ability. He was ordained by Hudson Presbytery on 4 June 1886.

Pastor Skinner served a church in Ramapo, New York, for three years but his poor health (he had contracted tuberculosis) compelled him to seek a more healthful climate. He filled pulpits briefly in Fort Davis, Texas, and in Rocky Ford, Colorado, before moving to New Mexico where he was stated supply in Las Cruces in early 1892.

On 12 June 1894 he married Miss Jean Garrett of Princetown, Kentucky. Described as an austere, sharp-featured and energetic woman, she bore Skinner two sons, Arthur, who died in infancy, and Theodore Hawthorne, born in March 1898.

Rev. Skinner purchased a home at 922 Eighth Street, and his mother Catherine E. Skinner came from Youngstown in 1894 to live with the family. Mrs. Skinner sat beside her daughter-in-law Jean for services for many years until the age of 90. A petite woman, she was beloved by the congregation. She died only a few months ahead of her son.

Rev. Skinner was becoming fragile and was living on borrowed time. He took a leave of absence to recover his strength, a two-month vacation during that first summer of 1893. In the fall of 1900, it was necessary to be away for a period twice that long. Still, he labored diligently.

In 1897 he planned an anniversary celebration to highlight the congregation's ten years of self-support. He was commissioner of general

assembly in Los Angeles in 1903, representing the Presbytery of Santa Fe. Under his leadership, young people in Las Vegas organized services for inmates at the county jail and assisted with programs for those assigned to "convict camp" in the Gallinas Canyon, where convict labor was building a mountain road.

His health remained precarious and he tendered his resignation as early as June of 1907, but the Session was loath to accept it. The congregation voted to discontinue evening services of worship and asked the Session to secure an assistant for him. They would raise an additional \$600. There are no existing records that an assistant was found, but Mr. Skinner agreed to stay on and work to the extent of his strength. He periodically thereafter asked to be allowed to resign, in 1914 and again in 1916, but the congregation voted 59-9 to keep him on. Session decided to try to alleviate some of the burden by holding their meetings in the Skinner home.

One of the young congregants in the church who remained in the community into adulthood told of watching her frail pastor walk slowly up the hill toward home, hands clasped behind his back, deep in thought. He was by then a dignified old man, aloof, with few close friends, she imagined. Light shone brightly from deep-set eyes. He was of serious mien and wore a goatee.

There was a celebratory dinner ahead of the annual meeting of the congregation on 4 April 1917, honoring Skinner's 25 years of service in Las Vegas, with remarks by several, letters of congratulations and a gift. One year later he wrote his definitive letter of resignation, dated 13 April 1918. His desire was granted at last, effective the first of the following month. A portion of the resolution adopted at the congregational meeting of 14 April reads:

*Whereas failing health has caused the retirement from active service of our beloved pastor...and whereas during the years he has been with us his cheerful patience under the burden of weakness and pain, his active interest in the welfare of his fellow man, and his rare spiritual vision coupled with unusual breadth of intellect, have made him a source of great inspiration to us, and an important factor in the education of our children: Therefore be it resolved that we...do hereby express our deep regret and sorrow at the severing of a relation which for twenty-six years has so harmoniously existed...and that it is the earnest hope and prayer of the congregation that...his strength may be so conserved that his life will long continue to be an uplifting force among us... (Schufle 1970, 61)*

The congregation then conferred upon him the designation of pastor emeritus.

After contracting the flu, Rev. Skinner died at his home on 12 February 1920, having spent his energies freely and unselfishly for the

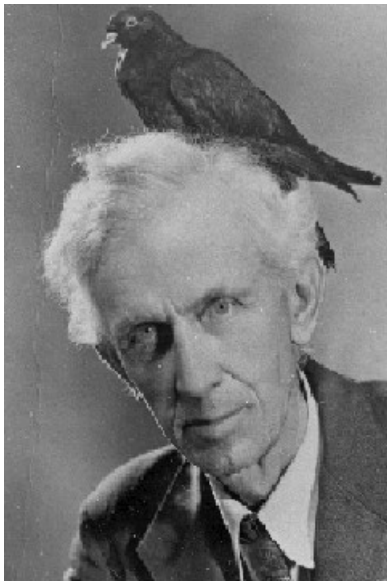
church he loved. The final words of his obituary from the Daily Optic read: "Of him it can be truthfully said, `His life was gentle and the elements so mixed in him, that nature might stand up and say to all the world, this was a man.'"

Ruth Hazelton and Dale B. Gerdeman 1998

## BYRON TRUMAN MILLS

***Byron Truman Mills, known affectionately to his friends as "Judge Mills," became a leading lawyer, businessman, and philanthropist in Las Vegas. He dedicated a stained-glass window in the First Presbyterian Church to the memory of his wife Fanchon "Fannie" Kenderdine Mills.***

Byron Mills was born 29 October 1865 in Topeka, Kansas, the son of Colonel Theo. B. Mills and Hanna Amelia Smith Mills. His father was a Civil War veteran who had moved to Topeka in about 1864. Colonel Mills conducted a business college, was assistant State Treasurer, a member of



**Byron T. Mills**

the Kansas state legislature, and a member of the leading real estate firm Mills and Smith in Topeka. Young Byron was educated in a Catholic grade school and city high school in Topeka. In 1884 when he was 19, he moved to New Mexico to join his father, who moved from Kansas to pioneer in the real estate business in Las Vegas. Colonel Theo Mills became a leading pioneer in New Mexico. He built the first resort hotel at Montezuma, in the Sangre de Cristo mountains north of Las Vegas for visitors attracted by the areas's climate, nearby hot springs and historic sites. The hotel was later destroyed by fire. The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway, having already established a line to the ice ponds on the river above the hot springs, built another resort hotel. Today the renovated building and improvements make up the 100-acre campus of the Armand Hammer United World College of the American West, one of nine campuses whose central office is in London..

Continuing his education in Las Vegas, Byron graduated from the Las Vegas Academy. He passed the territorial bar exam, and later became the oldest and longest-practicing lawyer in New Mexico. He was an abstractor for many years.

He married Fanchon C. "Fannie" Kenderdine in Topeka on 18 December 1895. She was born in Philadelphia on 2 June 1866, the daughter of Charles S. and Sarah Kenderdine, who were Quakers. The family moved from Philadelphia to Iowa, then to Topeka in 1871. In addition to Fanchon, they were the parents of two boys, Frank M., and Charles S., and another daughter, Marion G. Kenderdine.

Byron and Fannie remained childless, and she became one of the founders of the first hospital in Las Vegas. After 46 years of marriage to

Byron, she died on 26 March 1941 and was buried in Topeka. In her memory, Byron dedicated a stained-glass window in the First Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas.

A tall, lanky man, his movements were methodical, and his expressions were those of a thoughtful and serious person. He was kind and generous, and there was a playful side to his personality that can be seen in the wording he used in a one-page sketch of Las Vegas combined with a few words about himself. Titled, *The Boy That Came to Our Town*. it was dedicated to the E. Romero Hose and Fire Company, Las Vegas, and the firemen of New Mexico. Included with the story is a humorous photo of him with a pigeon sitting on his head, pictured above.

In the sketch he wrote as if he were someone else, observing both himself and Las Vegas. It included a poem about the Firemen's Ball, and a statement on his life:

*A few brief words will tell the story of my life: work, sleep, thrift, some play, joys and sorrows. This is no doubt the story of your life and of most of the human race and will be of interest to you, as the now told narrative of yourself. In a few brief years, another sixty years will have passed away. Then someone will again tell the story his life in the same six short words and of the glories of the past, of today, and so on down through the ages yet to come, and it will still be the story of your life, the story of my life and of the coming generations. Now the boy that came to our Town nearly sixty years ago has been growing old. He sits in his old armchair, trying to look into the far beyond. He has seen the crowds go surging by, seeking the great success. The weak dropped out and the strong marched on. Success is but a hollow word; achievements we may have...No man has ever yet found a complete success.*

*The goal of life is but the end, uncherished and unsought. Then why not mix with work a little play and dance and dance and dance at the Firemen's Ball? No doubt, you would like to know his name. I know him very well.*

*We ate together and slept together, and I have known him all his life. In fact, I was present at his birth and he bears my name. (Byron T. Mills 1942)*

After his wife died, Byron lived alone on the third floor of the Plaza Hotel, one of his many properties, for several years. He also lived for a time at the Las Vegas Elks Club, where he was an active member and a generous donor. In July 1950 Byron was attending an Elks convention in Miami, Florida, when he died of a brief illness. After services in Las Vegas, his body was sent to Topeka for burial in the family plot beside his late wife, Fannie. His obituary in the 20 July 1950 edition of the *Las Vegas Daily Optic* reads:

*Yesterday morning in Miami, Florida, Byron T. Mills, a resident of Las Vegas for over 60 years, died after a brief illness. Another of the true pioneers of this community has left us. Judge Mills, as he was known to his many friends, had often boasted that he would live 'to be at least 90 years old.' He lacked a little over five years of attaining that goal. Always a scholar, Judge Mills retained an active mentality and could recall with accuracy events which occurred a half century ago.*

*He was a shrewd businessman who gained property holdings and financial stability by dint of hard work and rigid self-discipline.*

*Even after he announced that he had retired from business, Judge Mills continued to actively manage his properties down to the smallest detail. In recent years Judge Mills made his home at the Elks Club and participated in the fraternal fellowship of that organization. He gained national notice with his financial contributions to the Elks Foundation, by becoming the largest single donor to that charitable fund.*

*A kindly man, Judge Mills made friends with children, keeping a store of candy and gum on hand to pass out to the youngsters. He also had a knack of handling animals and birds--often having trained birds as pets.*

*Judge Mills will long be remembered by the older residents, his fraternal brothers and his young friends.*

*He had a niece, Ruth W. Webb, who resided at Inglewood, California. During his lifetime he provided her with a portion of his life savings, and a paragraph of his will reads, "All of the balance of my estate real, personal and mixed, wheresoever it may be found and of whatsoever it may consist, I give and devise unto deformed and crippled children, in such manner as my executors may arrange for." In keeping with his wishes, the executors of his estate delivered his holdings to the Child Health Center of Las Vegas, and this organization carried out his directives throughout the schools of Las Vegas for many years, until the Federal government made it impractical for small charitable foundations to exist, and the Child Health Center expired. The organization served children in the first six grades of the public schools in Las Vegas. It provided milk, vitamins, and special medical services for needy and handicapped children.*

The Mills' matching monuments in the Topeka Cemetery in Section 57 are of pink granite and are huge and unique. The monuments are nearly six feet tall and six feet wide, and one has an extraordinarily long inscription.

It reads:

*OUR HOME*

*As I look into the past I sometimes wonder if there ever was a wife like mine. So good and fine, so dear and kind.*

*MEMORIAL*

*A young man in his youth seeks his mate. Then comes the march of time with its sunshine, and shadows and the problems of life. Hand in hand they travel the paths of destiny with its joys and its sorrows.*

*They have vision and look forward to the time, not too far distant when they may enjoy uninterrupted companionship with some play and do those things which they so desire in their youth. For this achievement there is necessary much labor, thrift, privation, disappointment and possibly sadness, but they gladly take up their tasks and proceed with fortitude. Finally, but not as soon as expected, and only after the*



*eye begins to dim and the foot begins to falter, this vision is realized, but the mantle of death then falls and you must walk alone. (Mills 1950)*

Dale B. Gerdeman 1987

**Sources:**

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Last Will and Testament of Byron T. Mills, San Miguel County Court Records, July 26, 1950.

Bell, James E., *Byron Truman Mills*.

Lucero, Noe B., *Blood, Money, and Adventure in the Making of History*.

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Correspondence from Mrs. Josephine Spatz, Margaret A. Smith, and Sarah T. McNeive, all of Topeka, Kans., in response to a query published in the column, "Peggy of the Flint Hills," in the *Topeka Daily Capital*.

# 2

## Early Presbyterian Educators

Las Vegas had two public school systems and a university in the early days -- the West Las Vegas Public Schools, the East Las Vegas Public Schools, and New Mexico Normal University, now New Mexico Highlands University.

Early Presbyterian educators included Thomas G. Rodgers, one of the outstanding mathematics teachers in the USA. Rodgers moved to Las Vegas in 1914 and taught at New Mexico Normal University. His innovative teaching method was highly praised by many of his students. He served as an elder in the Church from 1921-1924 and donated a stained glass window in honor of his wife. Rodgers spent years writing a book which was accidentally destroyed. He never found the incentive to start it again. Knowing the quality of his mind, we can believe that the loss of his writing was an important one.

Frank Carroon was listed in *Who's Who in America* during his career as president of the New Mexico Normal University and in later years when he was Director of Extension. "So well known and beloved did he become during his long term of office and as Dean and professor of psychology that Dean Carroon became almost a household word all over New Mexico." F. Stanley, *The Las Vegas (New Mexico) Story* p. 238.

Ralph Roy Larkin came to Las Vegas in 1904 to fill an opening as a school principal and became superintendent of the East Las Vegas Public Schools. He and his family made the most of every opportunity to pitch camp in the surrounding mountains. Las Vegas is blessed with an abundance of historic lore and many natural attractions. Few people enjoy them to the extent that the Larkins did. R.R.'s wife Anna Summers Larkin was active in church and civic affairs and wrote poetry. Her poems were witty, serious and religious or about nature. People who are familiar with the Las Vegas area will recognize many of the landmarks she portrayed so well.

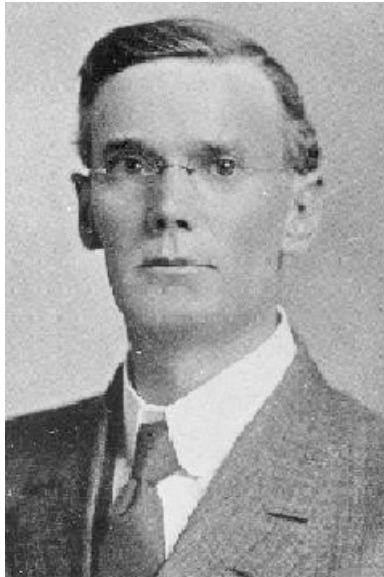
Adolphine Schubert Kohn was the music teacher for the East Las Vegas Public school system. She taught music in the grade schools, junior high, and high school. She also gave private lessons and organized a variety of musical programs each year that included adult singers. The organist for the First Presbyterian Church, she directed the "Candle-light Services" at Christmas time each year. Adolphine's second husband was Joseph L. Kohn, was a professional gambler and a homespun philosopher.

Jeanette Inches taught Latin and English at New Mexico Normal University. Under her leadership the women of the First Presbyterian Church became a very active group named the "King's Daughters".

# TOM GLADSTONE RODGERS

Tom Gladstone Rodgers was an outstanding life-long math teacher. After a good effort by a student in the classroom he occasionally would say, "Give your mother my compliments." It was a highly sought and seldom given remark. Rodgers was listed by the American Mathematical Society as one of the fifteen leading mathematicians in the nation. (*The Las Vegas Story*, Stanly 1911).

He was born in Stallbridge, Dorsetshire, England, on 21 December 1868. His father was George Rodgers, a clergyman, whose first wife died suddenly, leaving him with five children. Rev. Rodgers' second wife Emily Chant Rodgers became the mother of an additional five children, the last of which was born in the United States. Tom was the second child of this



marriage. In the spring of 1873 Rev. Rodgers, his wife and nine children immigrated to Hawley, Minnesota, where he became leader of a colony. Tom's maternal grandparents were the oldest members of the colony.

Rodgers was always called Gladstone by his family. His early schooling took place wherever his father had churches. After age ten he stayed in Money Creek, Minnesota, and first taught in the rural schools in that area. He had his first college work in the Normal School in Winona, Minnesota. In 1890, he began studies in Valparaiso University (Indiana), which was taken over by the Lutheran University Association in 1925. Tom completed his studies there in 1892. In 1896 he entered the University of Tennessee, and concurrent with his studies there, taught mathematics in a local high school.

He graduated in 1900, with a Bachelor of Arts degree and at the same time began graduate work in mathematics, having written a thesis titled "The Summation of Some Algebraic Series." He taught high school mathematics in Minnesota for nine years and continued graduate studies for two summer sessions at the University of Wisconsin, in Madison. In 1909-1910 he carried on his graduate work at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, then took one additional summer session at the University of Wisconsin where he obtained his Master of Arts degree in 1910.

**Tom Gladstone**

Rodgers moved to New Mexico for his health and became professor of mathematics at New Mexico State Teachers College, Las Cruces, from 1910-1914. He then moved to New Mexico Normal University (later New Mexico Highlands) where he served as assistant dean and professor of mathematics from 1914 to 1923; dean from 1923 to 1930; and professor of

mathematics from 1930 to 1941. In 1941 he became Dean Emeritus of the University, and the administration building was named in his honor.

Dean Rodgers was a much beloved educator. In his teaching, he practiced the belief that a student learned best when he/she was led to learn, rather than being taught. He was a good speaker and entertained both large audiences and classes. One of his students, Dwares T. Rieger, wrote:

*Dean Rodgers was . . . the best math teacher I ever had. I've always said he was the only man teacher I ever had that I truly loved. He was a wonderful man. (Rieger 1985)*

Students who had other plans for their lives were captivated by his methods and some became mathematics teachers. One prominent Highlands graduate attributed his success in atomic research to the dean. Students remember him as an excellent teacher and a very kind person. The Class of 1919 dedicated its annual, *The Southwest Wind*, to him with this tribute: "To Dean Thomas G. Rodgers, teacher, philosopher, humorist and friend, in grateful recognition of his rare personality and his years of untiring efforts in behalf of the school."

He was a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and co-founder of its New Mexico branch. Other memberships included the American Mathematical Society, Mathematics Association of America (Charter Member), American Educational Association, and New Mexico Schoolmasters (Honorary Life Member). He served on the National Textbook Revision Committee for many years and was highly regarded in this field.

In 1911 Rodgers married Ellen Daniels, an artist from Crystal Lake, Illinois. It is believed they met in Silver City, New Mexico. Both were avid gardeners and their yard was filled with flowers. He regarded the making of home and garden as a high priority in life. He held mothers in high esteem; it was a great disappointment that the Rodgers couple had no children.

Rodgers donated a stained-glass window with a memorial brass plaque reading: "In cherished memory of my wife Ellen Frances" to the First Presbyterian Church. He served as an elder from 1921 to 1924 and on various committees. In September 1934 the matter of church federation or church union with the Christian Church of Las Vegas was taken under consideration. The committee of the congregation consisted of himself, Frank Carroon, and A. H. Gerdeman. The committee recommended against the union.

Throughout his life, Rodger's study at home was filled with current books and scholarly publications. He wanted to avoid the possibility of losing his memory in his later years and decided he could overcome this by memorizing poetry. Despite lifelong bronchitis, Rodgers homesteaded some land near Roswell and took great pride in this achievement. The arduous

task required him to clear the land. He reached it by rail and on foot and found it necessary to camp there at times. Rodgers died on 19 May 1956. His body was transported to Illinois so that he could be buried beside his wife at "the Brick Church," about ten miles from Polo, Illinois.

Dale B. Gerdeman 1985

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## **RALPH ROY LARKIN**

***In 1888, after graduating from high school in Huron, South Dakota, Ralph Roy Larkin drove a team of oxen for a young man named Walsh, an invalid who had been told that "roughing it" would be good for his delicate health. They drove down through Kansas to Arizona, and finally to Las Cruces, New Mexico. Ralph Roy set up camp each night along the way, making beds of pine branches. The two slept in sleeping bags or under yellow slickers.***

Ralph Roy Larkin was born on 29 November 1869 in San Francisco, California, the son of Colonel Wallace T. Larkin, a veteran of the Civil War, and Dr. Harriet Hope Hill Larkin, one of the first women physicians in the United States. At the time of their son's birth, the couple was visiting Colonel Larkin's father, Thomas Oliver Larkin, a distinguished California citizen.

Ralph Roy's mother had earlier served her medical internship at Bellevue Hospital in New York City. She was ahead of her time, advocating exercise for pregnant women, and was committed to "natural childbirth" as a method for delivery. Her son was born to her by this method.

Some years later, Colonel Wallace Larkin was killed in a boiler explosion, and Ralph Roy's mother took up a claim in what was then the "West," in Huron, South Dakota. Subsequently, their house burned down and the family moved into the cellar of the home, where they had some difficulty keeping warm. Perhaps because a woman physician was not yet readily accepted in the scheme of things at that period, these years may have been difficult. Ralph Roy did not graduate from high school until he was nineteen, possibly because of the difficulties.

Ralph Roy moved to Las Cruces, in southern New Mexico, where he found an opportunity to continue his education. He was a member of the first class to graduate from the New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mining in 1894 (now New Mexico State University). He promptly returned to his home in Huron, where he subsequently held positions with the schools. There he married Anna Summers in 1897. Offered a position at New Mexico A & M on the faculty, he and Anna moved back to Las Cruces in 1898, where he taught for three years. Daughters Margaret and Katherine were born there.

In 1901 the family moved to Gallup, where he served as superintendent of schools. While in Gallup he developed an interest in Navajo rugs and baskets. He bought many pieces, possibly with the idea of opening a small shop. But Gallup was a rough mining town at the time, and he decided instead to move.

In 1904 R. R. and his wife and two small daughters moved to Las Vegas where he accepted a position as principal at the Castle School, which at the time housed the upper grades. In 1905, he was named superintendent of schools.

One of their first acts in Las Vegas, on 5 March 1905 was to place their names on the membership roll of the First Presbyterian Church on Douglas Avenue by letter of transfer. Both had held leadership positions in their previous churches over the years.

In his book, *Recuerdos Encantados*, C. V. Koogler, tells how Mr. Larkin rode "a big, fine horse" between the Castle School and the lower grade school on Douglas Avenue. He had an office in each school, and in each office was found a desk, a bookcase and a buggy whip! Koogler recalls an occasion when a group of boys, himself among them, left the Castle School at afternoon recess and made straight for Green's Lake (site of the present golf course) to dig for gophers. Larkin arrived on his fine sorrel horse and fetched the lot of them back to school. When one tried to escape, the buggy whip served to bring him back into line!

In September 1908 Mr. Larkin took a brief leave of absence to accompany an educational exhibit the district had assembled for display before the sixteenth National Irrigation Congress in Albuquerque. The display was a major project, covering two hundred feet of wall space and consisting of student art (watercolors, pencil and brush work), daily work papers in two subject areas from each grade, first through high school, and photographs of both schools, with interior views showing arrangement and equipment.

Perhaps because he considered this event a highlight, or perhaps because he wanted to concentrate upon a commitment he had made in 1907 with Ginn & Company publishers, Mr. Larkin returned from the exhibit and submitted his resignation as superintendent, effective 1 January 1909.

His experience on the trail as a young man gave him a life-long enthusiasm for the out-of-doors. Las Vegas, with its high desert scenery, seemed an ideal place for the family to remain in order to pursue these pleasures. Larkin often applauded the privileges of living in the area because of its historic lore and natural marvels. Daughter Katherine has happy memories of yearly trips to the mountains where the four made camp under the stars and woke to the smell of bacon frying and biscuits baking in a "Dutch oven" over a campfire. The girls donned yellow slickers in the rain and chased run-away packhorses. The family rode horseback and fished for trout, which they baked in leaves.

With Ginn & Company, Larkin was assigned to represent the publisher's interests in New Mexico and Arizona. He traveled a good deal, usually by automobile, and was able to benefit from the broad contacts he had established earlier among educational leaders in both states. His passion was education, and he made many public appearances to speak on

the subject. He also entertained groups with his beautiful singing voice. Though he never took lessons, he could reach the deepest bass notes of "Davy Jones' Locker" and "There's Nobody Young or Fair or True (said the owl . . .)"

In 1927 when his daughters were in their final years at the University of Kansas, Ralph Roy discovered, quite by accident, that he had a very rich and colorful ancestral heritage. Katherine was visiting in Byfield, Massachusetts, thirty miles north of Boston, where she found that in that small town there was "a Larkin on every front porch." She was overwhelmed to discover so many distant aunts, uncles and cousins. Her father had been completely out of touch with these relatives. He was pleased to be able to acquaint himself with his family tree and to present a copy of it to the Boston library (along with a short diary he had kept when he drove the team of oxen south from South Dakota.)

This account allows us a glimpse of four members of this distinguished family. When Paul Revere embarked on his famous ride on the night of 18 April 1775, he is said to have borrowed his horse from Deacon John Larkin, great-grandfather of Ralph Roy. The British subsequently caught Revere, then released him, but they declined to return the borrowed horse to him!

Ebenezer Larkin Jr., believed to be a brother to John, operated a book and stationery store at No. 50 Cornhill in Boston. The shop was known to have been in operation as early as 1795, and a picture of its front is thought to be the first such printed representation of an American bookstore.

Guns from a British ship set Charlestown near Boston ablaze during the Revolutionary War. The family's home was in Charlestown, and John Larkin's wife carried son Thomas Oliver from their burning home while John was behind the American breastworks at Bunker Hill. Surviving those difficult years during and following the Revolution, son Thomas developed a mechanical turn and, in 1804, after living and working at Salem, he purchased a mill on the River Parker at Byfield. Once used to smelt iron from bog ore found nearby, the mill began grinding leaves and stems from Virginia tobacco into snuff. Stuffed in bladders, it sailed the seas in clipper ships, and in Eastern jars it rode the ox-powered "freights" of the early 1800s. Descendants of Thomas Larkin were still part of the firm a century and a quarter later when Ralph Roy learned of its existence.

His grandfather had moved on, however, to other worthy pursuits. Thomas Oliver followed his older half-brother, Capt. John Rogers Cooper, to the coast of California, which was a province of Mexico, arriving in Monterey on the southern tip of Monterey Bay aboard a trading vessel in 1832. He married a rich widow in June of 1833 and there he started a general merchandise store and other businesses. He was an immigrant from the United States but his talent for politics made him an influential resident of Monterey. He built the first flourmill in the area as well as the first



sawmill. Larkin designed and built his home in the early 1830s and it later became the Consulate. The home was the first two-story adobe building in Monterey and became the pattern for the "Monterey" style of architecture.

*Larkin played a prominent role in the acquisition of California by the United States, a goal he had long harbored. Even prior to his formal appointment on 29 January 1844 as U. S. consul at Monterey (the commission was received 24 June), he was involved in the political life of the province and was well known to U.S. naval officers who frequently called at Monterey. During the critical years 1844 through 1846, which led up to the Mexican War, he was in the diplomatic forefront, working assiduously to thwart any overt British and French designs on the province. ...President James K. Polk...appointed Larkin "confidential agent in California" on 17 October 1845 in a secret dispatch from Secretary of State James Buchanan. Larkin was instructed to work for an independent California, which would "become one of the free and independent States of this Union," if such could be effected without alienating Mexico. Then "if the People should desire to unite their destiny with ours, they would be received as brethren."To that end Larkin dedicated all his efforts (American National Biography, s.v. Larkin, 1999)*

American explorer John C. Fremont and followers set up a republic at Sonoma in 1846 under their home styled Bear Flag. The war between United States and Mexico from 1846 to 1848 resulted in Commodore John D. Sloat capturing the capital Monterey, and claiming California for the United States. Southern Californians resisted U.S martial law. In 1847 U.S. General Stephen W. Kearny defeated the southern Californians and by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 Mexico formally ceded the territory to the United States.

After California was granted statehood in 1850, Thomas Larkin was appointed naval agent for the new government at Monterey. Some 4000 of his letters in nine leather volumes have been published by the University of California at Berkeley and are said to constitute the state's richest historical collection. His home, with its lavish furnishings, was presented to the state in 1957 by a granddaughter.

It was grandfather Thomas whom father Wallace and mother Harriet were visiting when Ralph Roy was born in 1869. During the Civil War, Captain Wallace T. Larkin had led a Negro regiment. He was subsequently promoted to the rank of colonel and served as commandant at Fort McIntosh in Laredo, Texas.

On 15 May 1866, just after the end of the Civil War, Apaches raided the ranch of a Major Darling near Fort McIntosh. Mary Darling, the major's daughter, was a survivor and recalled the incident in a newspaper account. Colonel Larkin took cavalry to repulse the Indians and rescue the family. The bodies of six men, including that of Major Darling, were found on the road; they had been shot through with arrows. Troops saved the women and children from captivity. Mary Darling had grasped the colonel's hand, exclaiming, "Now we are safe! Have you seen my father?" Colonel Larkin

buried the dead and is said to have shown all the kindness in his power to the six families while he remained at the fort. Ralph Roy was justly proud of his family history and enthusiastic about its coming to light.

Shortly after accepting his post with the Ginn & Company, Mr. Larkin established a tradition of presenting a gavel to each incoming president of the New Mexico Education Association, a tradition he maintained for twenty-two years. Each gavel was made by him of woods native to the area or gathered "from far and sundry parts and places," according to a 1932 account in the Santa Fe New Mexican. The association, which he had so



**Ralph Roy Larkin & Anna**

honored over the years, decided to turn the tables on him. At its 1932 annual meeting, with 2000 teachers in attendance, Mrs. Nellie Hauser of Tucumcari presented Mr. Larkin, described in the newspaper account as a "stalwart bald-headed, benevolent looking" gentleman, with a gavel of his own! Made by E. H. Mayer of the Normal University, it was inlaid with silver bands appropriately inscribed and it rested in a handsome casket of finely grained woods made by manual arts students of the Tucumcari schools, L.

A. Carson, instructor.

In accordance with the tradition established by Mr. Larkin himself, this special gavel was made of rare and curious pieces from times and places of significance from his past.

There was a piece from a tree on the grounds of his high school in Huron, under which he was said to have courted his wife. Another piece was from a tree planted by him at the agricultural college at the time of his graduation. Still a third was from an old lab table he made for use at the Castle School. The handle contained a piece from the snuff mill of his great-grandfather and a small plug from the "Washington Elm" in Cambridge, Massachusetts, under which General Washington had assumed command of the Continental armies; a third piece was from a viga of the Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe. Ralph Roy Larkin is said to have been surprised and visibly moved by this gesture of affection shown by his colleagues in his sixty-third year of life.

The Larkins maintained a summer home on Storrie Lake, near Las Vegas, and here they annually entertained friends and school officials. On 25 June 1937 in the late Friday afternoon, a party was under way when Ralph Roy, just returned from motoring on the lake, stepped into a tent adjacent to the house to change his clothes. He suffered a heart attack and died before help could be summoned.

Carefully nurtured relationships had endeared him to the whole of the teaching profession. Colleagues and his many friends from other walks of life mourned the passing of this much-esteemed and earnest mentor of education, long to be remembered for his pleasing personality and his eagerness to contribute to the happiness of others.

Katherine Larkin, Ruth Hazelton and Dale B. Gerdeman 1989

## ANNA SUMMERS LARKIN

***Anna Summers, wife of Ralph Roy Larkin, came from early American stock, the family having immigrated to Philadelphia in 1752. Her great-grandfather and four of his brothers fought under Washington in the Revolutionary War. After the establishment of the Republic, her great-grandfather became associated with the United States mint and, according to the Summers family history, his descendants were continuously employed there until 1899.***

Anna Summers was born in Marshalltown, Iowa, on 6 September 1871. Her father, a veteran of the Civil War, moved to South Dakota with the western migration. Anna had an older sister; a brother died at an early age. Their father was postmaster in Huron, South Dakota. Anna had vivid memories of the impressive American flag that hung at the Post office and recalled that her father was privileged to carry a gun. Huron was a farm community, but the family lived in town. Anna grew to womanhood there and taught in the schools for eight years prior to her marriage in 1897 to Ralph Roy Larkin. In the 1920s she was able to return to Huron and was happy to renew acquaintances with many of her childhood friends.

As a twenty-six-year-old bride she moved with Ralph Roy to Mesilla Park, near Las Cruces, New Mexico, where their daughters Margaret and Katherine were born. The family had a brief sojourn in Gallup before moving to Las Vegas in 1904.

Anna Summers Larkin, along with her husband, joined the First Presbyterian Church in March of 1905, where she remained a diligent worker throughout her life. She was a serious student of the Bible, and at one time served as a trustee of the church. She was also active in club and civic affairs across the years. Significantly, she helped found the League of Women Voters in New Mexico and was its first president. A Republican, Mrs. Larkin was elected to the New Mexico legislature in 1924 but was ousted by a strictly partisan vote of the Democratic majority, which made the claim that the election in San Miguel County had been fraudulent. Locally, she was an active member of Delta Kappa Gamma, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, Sorosis Woman's Club, and the Sew and So Club. Anna was well versed in "Robert's Rules of Order," so the ladies held her in respect and turned to her when in doubt about how to proceed with the conduct of their meetings.

Mrs. Larkin was an accomplished writer of verse, some in a serious vein, other humorous in nature. A few of her verses are appended as a part of this short biography, as they reveal much about the warmth and character of this vigorous woman. The poems reveal so clearly life in the early part of the 20th century.

The first three are a witty trilogy of the changing face of transport across the years: first, the phaeton; next, the "horseless carriage" (the date on this one echoes with the memory of the Larkin's first wedding anniversary); the last recalls a memorable ride in an airplane. A couple of the verses reflect Anna's great sense of civic duty. One, entitled "The Club Zinnias," is a tribute to women whose talents regularly sprinkled the town with flecks of color. Anna would have been nearly fifty at the time.

Seven of the verses are philosophical in tone, revealing her deeply religious nature, "Hallowed Be Thy Name" ponders the nature of prayer. "Moods" and "Time" reflect her growing realization that life is fleeting, and she wrestles with the approach of death and calls upon her Savior to grant comfort. In "Christmas" she conveys how despair, doubt and grief are often sharpest at holiday time. In "Human Trinity," the reader senses that Anna's mind and spirit, still young, are now caught in an aging body that perhaps will no longer do her bidding, and she finds solace in her faith that it will one day experience renewal. The final verse of the collection is untitled but has as its theme the lift she receives with the dawning of each New Year.

Among the verses most revealing of her personality are four dealing with the theme of her great love of the out-of-doors, a love which husband Ralph Roy obviously shared and which must have enriched their relationship. "Our Dream Cabin" describes three properties they owned in the Las Vegas area over the years and reveals her dream that a site for still a fourth awaits them for eternity. "Lost Trails" tells of Anna's deep yearning for the trail rides shared in years past. (Incidentally, Anna never rode side-saddle, as many women did, as it was impractical in the mountains.) "Heavenly Architecture" is humorous and makes vivid what she most valued: close friends, her writing, lilacs in bloom, the smell of cedar on the trail, the song of a meadow lark, a rosy sunset. And finally, there is in the collection a loving tribute to Ralph Roy and to those contented times they shared on horseback. Its reading brings to a fitting close this brief account of a worthy life.

Anna Summers Larkin died in Las Vegas on October 1941 at age 70.

Katherine Larkin, Ruth Hazelton and Dale B. Gerdeman 1989

Anna Summers Larkin's poems describe her love of familiar places in the Las Vegas and Pecos areas. She refers to the family's lakeside cabin (at Storrie Lake), "Old Baldy", (Hermit's Peak), Brazel Park (a privately owned quarter section of land at 9200 feet in the mountains above Lower Colonias within the Santa Fe National Forest east of Pecos).

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

The New Year arrives  
Like the breath of the night,  
Like the dawning of hope,  
Like the coming of light;  
No change but in spirit,  
The same earth is here,  
But the heart meets the challenge  
Of "Happy New Year!"

#### HALLOWED BE THY NAME

Prayer is the quickening stream of love  
Each grateful heart has known,  
Whose swift and mighty current flows  
Straight to the great, white Throne.

Prayer is a gentle fragrance,  
Ascending to Paradise  
From the simple faith of a little child,  
Or from some great sacrifice.

Prayer is the cry of a stricken soul,  
Passing under the rod,  
That wild, despairing plea for help,  
Which tears at the heart of God!

These are the prayers Thy children  
Are lifting to Thee each day,  
All colored with human hopes and desires.  
Lord, teach us how to pray!

#### A POEM TO HER HUSBAND, R. R. LARKIN

When autumn nights and autumn frosts  
Put summer camps to rout,  
We mend and pack the old grub-bag,  
And get the saddles out,  
Old Baldy humps his shoulders high,  
And peers across The Crest,  
And when we tighten up the cinch,  
He whoops and tells the rest.

Then all the mountains, hastily  
Get out their best fall clothes,  
Their russets and their yellows,  
And crimson furbelows,

While every little, surly brook  
Clears up his troubled face,  
Comes tumbling down to meet us,  
In a wild, excited race.

A chipmunk runs to see us pass,  
With funny, quivering tail;  
A blue-jay shrieks, "Here's home folks!"  
They're coming up the trail!"

The peaks bend down to welcome us--  
The peaks, so proud and tall--  
The lonely forests wait for us;  
The cañons softly call.

## MARY JEANETTE INCHES

***The Presbyterian Women's Association in the First Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas was formerly named the King's Daughters. Mary J. Inches founded the group in about 1923 and served as president for many years.***

Mary Jeanette Inches was born in Springrove, Illinois, on 21 August 1870, to Hattie and David Inches. Her family spent some years in both Illinois and Kansas. She was a charter member of the United Presbyterian Church in Sterling, Kansas, with her membership dating from 10 November 1896. Several other members of her family joined the church at the same time, and younger members of the family joined five years later.



She attended North Bend High School for two years and finished high school at Tarkio College in Chicago. She also earned college credits at Tarkio and was granted a B.S. degree in 1899. She attended Chicago University and graduated with a Bachelor of Philosophy degree in 1902. As an undergraduate student, her major fields of special study were English, Latin and mathematics. Other fields of advanced study as an undergraduate were history, German and French.

Her teaching career started in 1902 in Stafford, Kansas, as a high school teacher of Latin and English as well as assistant principal. She taught there until 1904.

She continued her education during the summers at the Kansas State Teachers College in Emporia, and in 1904 was granted an elementary life certificate. She then moved to Sterling, Kansas, to become principal of the high school as well as a teacher of English and Latin. She was listed as a special student at Sterling College in 1908 in art and music. In 1911 she attended the summer Session at the University of Chicago and in 1912 was granted a scholarship at the University of Nebraska. In 1913 she obtained her master's degree in English language and literature. Her thesis for the master's degree was titled, *"Women in the English Drama Immediately Before Shakespeare."* The thesis was accepted in 1913.

Mary Jeanette

Mary J. Inches then moved to New Mexico, where she was head of the Department of Latin in Albuquerque High School. In the summer of 1920 she went to Columbia University in New York City to further her education and, in 1921, accepted a position at the New Mexico Normal University (now Highlands University) in Las Vegas, New Mexico, teaching Latin and English. She attended a summer Session in 1923 at the University of California and also spent the fall semester there in 1928. In 1935-36, she



attended the University of Southern California for several months and in 1939, retired from active teaching. In 1940 she became Assistant Professor Emeritus of English at New Mexico Normal University.

She became a member of Chapter H of P.E.O. in Las Vegas, and a member of Delta Kappa Gamma and Sigma Tau Delta. Her hobby was traveling, and she wrote:

*In 1927, March-September I traveled abroad, hearing lectures and studying conditions in Palestine, Egypt, Athens, Constantinople, Italy, Switzerland, and the Rhine Country, France, England and Scotland.*

*In 1930, I spent about three months on the Hawaiian Islands. Here, I studied social and educational conditions on the island Oahu, especially in the city, Oahu.*

Mary J. Inches maintained her membership in the First Presbyterian Church in the various communities during her lifetime. Under her direction the ladies of the church formed the King's Daughters in about 1923, a very active organization beginning in the period when Rev. Jackson was pastor. The King's Daughters of the First United Presbyterian Church donated a stained-glass window, and the accompanying brass plaque reads, "In Honor of Mary J. Inches, Founder of King's Daughters."

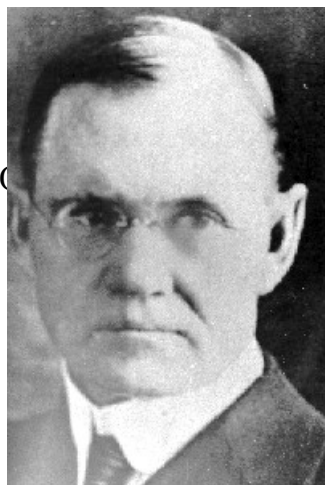
Miss Inches died on 4 December 1958 in Hutchinson, Kansas, at age 88 after a ten-week illness. Survivors included three sisters and a brother. Funeral services were held in Hutchinson, and she was buried in Sterling, Kansas.

Dale B. Gerdeman 1986

## FRANK CARROON

***Frank Carroon was well known throughout New Mexico as a lecturer and educator. He had the ability to inspire students and teachers with his own zeal and interest in education.***

Frank Carroon was born 10 October 1871 in Lafayette, Indiana, the son of Andrew and Mary (Tully) Carroon, who were natives of Indiana and of Ireland, respectively. Frank had two brothers, Charles F. and W. E., and a sister, Mabel. Their father was a contractor and builder. Frank graduated from the Indiana State Normal School in Terre Haute in 1894. In 1902, he received a Bachelor of Arts degree from the Indiana State University in Bloomington, and in 1913 a Master of Arts degree from the University of Denver.



Scudder of Edwardsport, Indiana, daughter of J. F. Scudder, a druggist and cattleman of Edwardsport. The couple were the parents of three children, Alice Dorothea (Barnes) Winkler, Frank Scudder Carroon, and Elsie Frances (Flynn).

From 1902 until 1904 he was head of the department of English in the high school at Columbus, Indiana. In 1904, he became principal of the north ward or division of Roswell, New Mexico, school. Four years later he taught English at Roswell High School and the next year was named principal. Land was available to settlers in the Roswell area and he met the requirements by living on the place for five years and obtaining the land title.

**Frank Carroon**

Frank Carroon wrote a manuscript telling of his personal experiences as a teacher. Portions of it read:

*In a few weeks, I found myself...under the necessity of securing a certificate to become a legally qualified teacher in New Mexico. It was no use to offer in-lieu-thereof a college diploma. The regular county examination had to be taken by all comers. The system of state-wide examinations based on questions carefully prepared by persons chosen for their knowledge of the subject, and their experience in teaching, had not yet come into practice in New Mexico. These county examinations were given by pick-ups who happened to be in the vicinity. The county superintendent, who was a surveyor by profession, was very busy and, therefore, delegated the conduct of the examination to others. It was my misfortune to be penalized by a grader in the subject of grammar, for writing a difficult paper full of unknown terms, and therefore wrong. However, a compromise was effected and the door opened for me for a career in the teaching profession in New Mexico. . . .*

*I soon found that the schools of Roswell compared very well with those of eastern cities of the same size, but conditions outside of the cities were indescribably bad... This was in the days of those bi-weekly land-seeker's excursions over the Santa Fe system which did much to develop the Pecos Valley and, incidentally, to dot the plains with deserted claim-shacks and broken down windmills--mute testimony to misplaced confidence and by-gone hopes...I became the proud proprietor of a quarter section of arid land and in the winter time, for a three-month's period, the teacher of the neighboring district school. My district was a princely domain, so far as extent goes, for it reached from the Pecos river to the White Mountains, a distance of more than seventy-five miles, with an attendance of about fifteen pupils scattered through all grades...*

*Those were great days when hope was young. Teachers were less calculating; more eager to be of service; more willing to go into outlying districts and suffer privations in order to build a State school system...One can scarcely resist the conviction that with the growth of knowledge there has come a decline in enthusiasm.*

*The standards for teachers certificates were low at that time...and...it was often possible to evade them through complacency of those entrusted with enforcement... The legislature at one time added a statute to the penal code making it a misdemeanor for school directors to employ a teacher who was not able to read and write.*

*There were many remote one-room schools with terms from two to seven months. The three month's term was very common--inequality of educational opportunity was the rule...*

*This brief retrospect leaves the writer optimistic toward the future of education in New Mexico, and convinced that conditions today are very much better than conditions were a quarter of a century ago. But still there lingers the fear that the schools will be as bad as the public will permit them to be. We cannot look to professional politicians or to those who represent corporate wealth to take up the fight for an effective school system. The temptation to use school positions and school revenues for selfish purposes is too great...There survives a theory in New Mexico... that political power is rightfully used to build a voting organization that can perpetuate itself in power through the ballot. Nothing but the wrath of an aroused and intelligent public can remove these abuses.*

*When will popular enlightenment become so wide-spread that every dollar of school revenue will be used to buy one-hundred cent's worth of education, accessible alike to all children of the State?*

In 1909 Mr. Carroon was called to New Mexico Normal University in Las Vegas to be professor of psychology and education and also teach history and English. After one year he became the first dean and professor of psychology. He became widely recognized for his superior ability, scholarly tastes and sound common sense. In 1923 he succeeded Jonathan H. Wagner as president of the institution. During his presidency, the university was given a sound financial basis and physical expansion. The academic standards of the faculty were raised. During the regular school term the enrollment stabilized at about 900. For summer Sessions it grew to

nearly 1,300 because of a State requirement that teachers take refresher courses. The school offered graduate work.

When Mr. Carroon first came to the university, the buildings consisted of Springer Hall and La Casa de Ramona. During his many years as Dean the domestic arts building and the walls and roof of the auditorium went up. During his time as President the education building was erected thus relieving the condition of housing grade, high school and college students in Springer Hall. The Adele Ilfeld Memorial Auditorium was completed, transferring it from a shed to one of the best auditoriums in the state. The gymnasium and heating plant also came into being.

During his regime. the University was accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools and by the American Associations of Teachers' Colleges. His administration was noted for the cooperative spirit that existed throughout the institution and for noteworthy progress in every department. The Normal Training School was erected, the new gymnasium and central heating plant were built. Under his presidency, innovations included employment of Ida Kruse McFarlane of Denver University as a guest lecturer annually for seven years; the inauguration of annual picnics for students and faculty, sponsored by local merchants in appreciation of their patronage; a student council organized in 1928; the first fraternity, Gamma Sigma, in 1929, followed by the chartering of two honor societies a year later.

In 1931 a change in the political complexion of the regents instilled a desire for Frank Carroon's removal despite his achievements as president, and an impending crisis played into their hands. The North Central Association had raised the standards for accreditation of teachers' colleges to a level, which was not met by the library facilities and the faculty qualification at this university. Abruptly, in May, the regents gave Carroon a forced leave of absence and named as president Dr. H. C. Gossard, previously dean of men at Nebraska Wesleyan. By employing well-qualified faculty replacements and by prompt strengthening of the library, Dr. Gossard obtained accreditation in 1932, not by the North Central Association, which would come later, but by the American Association of Teachers' Colleges.

Frank Carroon continued his employment at New Mexico Normal University. (In the last several decades the name "Normal" has become obsolete in University names and the name was changed to New Mexico Highlands University.) Frank became Director of Extension from 1933 to 1935 and in 1937. He was granted professor emeritus of Education status in 1937.

He also wrote numerous pamphlets and booklets on psychology, served as president of the New Mexico State Teachers' Association in 1926, as a charter member of the Las Vegas Rotary Club, and as a member of the Las Vegas San Miguel Chamber of Commerce. He was also a member of the

Chapman Lodge, No. 2, A.F. & A.M., and the White River I.O.O.F. (Independent Order of Odd Fellows), at Edwardsport, Indiana.

He was quoted in the 1931 edition of the New Mexico Normal University's Southwest Wind:

*The edged tool is worthless unless its metal has been drawn to a sharp point for cutting purposes. College discipline is designed to afford such an edge to the tools of the mind. But while securing such discipline we should not fail to pause now and then in our course to form friendships. Otherwise we shall find ourselves in the declining years of life successful in our particular line but nevertheless a solitary wayfarer whom no one regards and in whose destiny no one takes interest. (Southwest Wind 1931)*

Mr. and Mrs. Carroon were active members of the First Presbyterian Church. He was elected an elder July 2, 1911 and remained active in the church until his death. He and Alvin H. Gerdeman were selected to serve as a pulpit supply committee in 1935, at which time Rev. Homer F. Tegler was recommended to the congregation. During Rev. Tegler's vacation on 29 August 1937 Mr. Carroon filled the pulpit speaking on "Practical Christianity." Mrs. Carroon was president of the Ladies' League in 1935.

In a final tribute to Frank Carroon, his long-time friend Tom G. Rodgers said,

*I came to the territory of New Mexico and the Roswell high school in 1903 and was followed the next year by Mr. Carroon. I at once recognized him as a young man of high ideals, scholarly tastes and great devotion to teaching--qualities that bespoke a superior teacher. We became fast friends. His placid kindly nature proved a good balance wheel to my more mercurial nature. He began his educational career in New Mexico as principal of the north Roswell ward school. As soon as opportunity presented, he came into the high school as teacher of English and history. I always considered it largely due to his fine teaching and organizing ability that the high school during our association became the best with which I had been connected.*

*His superior ability was recognized by the community. When in 1909, I was preparing to leave the territory he was promptly, without solicitation, elected to the principalship of the high school.*

*Before entering upon his new duties, however, he was called to New Mexico Normal University as professor of English. The next year he was made the first Dean of this institution and professor of education. His wide preparation in pedagogical and philosophical studies coupled with his scholarly taste and sound common sense ideally fitted him for this position in which he made an enviable reputation.*

*In 1914, through his influence I was called to this institution as his assistant in the deanship. Thus, began another long period of association in educational work with him. I deemed it a rare privilege to be associated with Mr. Carroon and through him to contribute my [bit] to the building of the institution. When Mr. Carroon came to*

*this institution its physical equipment consisted of Springer Hall and La Casa de Ramona. During his many years as Dean the domestic arts building, and the walls and roof of the auditorium went up. But during his shorter period as President the education building was erected thus relieving the incongruous condition of housing grade, high school, and college students in Springer Hall.*

*The auditorium was completed, transferring it from a shed to one of the best in the state. The gymnasium and heating plant also came into being. The library building and the others now going up are built by others on the solid building foundation blazed by Mr. Carroon.*

*On the educational side, public education in the territory at that time was of comparative recent origin, necessarily undeveloped, more or less crude.*

*Mr. Carroon was peculiarly happy in his ability to inspire teachers to high ideals and sound educational practice. Throughout his Deanship and most of his Presidency this institution trained more of our teachers than all the other state institutions combined.*

*Who can measure the vast influence for better educational methods and ability to inspire their pupils carried from his classroom by this large group of teachers? These teachers and the pupils whom they inspired are his real memorial.*

*[This paragraph was slightly modified by the author for the purpose of clarification.] To me, he reached the highest plane of his success and usefulness during his Deanship. His success was due to superior teaching ability, scholarly tastes, and ability to resolve difficult situations by calm, patient, and friendly discussion. While I recognize his presidency was a success and the institution at that time needed a man of his type to put it on a sounder educational basis, I felt that it drew him away from the field in which he was most happy.*

*His demise takes from those of us who were privileged to call him friend a sympathetic and understanding comrade, from the institution one of its later pioneers, from the State an educator of noble parts, and from the family a kind and generous mate and parent.*

*Mr. Carroon has gone to his rest. The benign influences which his unselfish labors created live on. (Rodgers 1941)*

Frank Carroon died on 19 January 1941.

Dale B. Gerdeman 1987

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## ADOLPHINE KOHN

***Las Vegas, the public schools and the First Presbyterian Church were privileged for several decades to have the remarkable musical talents of Adolphine Schubert Kohn, a tireless worker, who was a descendant of Franz Schubert, the German composer.***

Adolphine Schubert Kohn was born in Leavenworth, Kansas, on 16 May 1871, the daughter of Chris Schubert and his wife, Pabbette. Adolphine attended Leavenworth schools, Columbia University of New York, Denver University, and the University of California, where she studied music. She was married to Charles L. Kohn in Chicago in 1894. They came to Las Vegas, New Mexico, in 1900. He died in 1913, and in 1920 she married his brother, Joseph L. Kohn, who died in 1946. Joe Kohn's life story has been told in Milton C. Nahm's book, *Las Vegas and Uncle Joe: The New Mexico I Remember*. Nahm calls this second marriage a "marriage of contraries," pointing out Adolphine's fondness for formal dinner parties. These were unattended by Uncle Joe, whose aversion to wearing a tie won him a place in the kitchen during the meal. Adolphine was apparently a determined woman, never acknowledging that Joe had "won" in his attempts to avoid her formal dinners.



to  
"look of astonishment that any such ceremony as had made them man and wife had actually taken place." Adolphine's cat, Blessing, seemed to personify their differences—and their willingness to tolerate them. The cat, subject to ridicule by Joe, often "lay in wait" for him when he returned home from a late night out. Despite these early morning attacks, Joe accepted the responsibility of feeding the "best liver that money could buy" to Adolphine's cat.

Adolphine Schubert Kohn came from a family of dramatic actors. First employed by the public schools in Las Vegas in 1916, she was an outstanding musician and served the community unstintingly. She organized the first orchestra and choir in the schools. Her influence was felt throughout the community by both adults and youth. She was an extraordinary teacher.

Her self-discipline and high standards induced those who performed under her supervision to do their best. She became organist of the First Presbyterian Church in 1926 and later the choir director. In the annual report for 4 April 1945 the Session reported: "The Minister and Elders wish to express their unstinted thanks to Mrs. Adolphine S. Kohn for her

**Adolphine  
Schubert Kohn**



continuous efforts in the choir. We are not unmindful of the strenuous life Mrs. Kohn lives, and yet, each Lord's Day finds her present at Bible School and Worship, faithfully and successfully directing the music. Particularly noticeable was the contribution of the choir on Easter Sunday." She joined the Church on 4 January 1948 by profession of faith.

Milton Nahm wrote about his "Aunt Phine": "A successful piano teacher and supervisor of music in Las Vegas public schools, [she was] hardworking, efficient and a winner every time she went to the post," except when she came up against Uncle Joe.

In a letter to Dr. Jay Schufle in 1970, Nahm wrote:

*"My aunt was a very energetic and able woman...[She] directed and conducted various choruses, plays and concerts...I recall many of the musical comedies she produced and directed, and I also recall her teaching me how to draw, when I was in the 4th grade in Las Vegas."*

Dr. Nahm reported how Adolphine would visit her old students whenever she went on a trip. On one occasion, Uncle Joe was telling how he paid the porter to "mislay" her luggage. What his reason and with what results remain a mystery. He anticipated that she would stop off in Springer, New Mexico, and phone to tell him how to fix Blessing's liver and remind him that the cat would not eat unless it was served out of a blue bowl. Her destination was the Columbia University Music Summer School, and in Uncle Joe's words, "She's got her old music pupils in every #!&@ little burg between here and Olathe, Kansas . . . she writes to them and they write to her, and she says she's making a trip east, and they say, `Why don't you stop off and visit, as we'd be thrilled.'"

In 1939 Grover Whalen, president of the New York World's Fair, appointed Adolphine Schubert Kohn to be a member of the National Advisory Council on Women's Participation for the State of New Mexico.

She was a charter member of the local chapters of Sorosis, Kappa Gamma, Tri Sigma Sorority, the Las Vegas Woman's Club, Business and Professional Women's Club, and the State Federation of Music. She served as the president of the Federated Music Clubs of New Mexico.

Adolphine Schubert Kohn died on 14 July 1949.

Dale B. Gerdeman 1985

# 3

## Second Generation Presbyterians in Las Vegas

Chrestina Laumbach Sanchez's parents had six girls and three boys. The girls were well trained in all domestic skills. They had a strong Christian family life and Chrestina's sister Margarita married Jose Emitterio Cruz, a Presbyterian minister, and her sister Estafinita married J. S. Candelario a Presbyterian evangelist in his early career.

William Morris Shillinglaw, Sr. had an unfulfilled dream of becoming the owner of a ranch. He loved Las Vegas and he loved farm animals. He was tireless in his work for his church, his civic chores and doing all he could to assist his two sons as they coped with crippling cases of arthritis.

Gertrude Nenno Shillinglaw had a thorough upbringing in the Roman Catholic Church. Her husband was a devout Presbyterian and when her children were small, she chose to change from Catholic to Presbyterian. She was a very competent teacher and taught Sunday School classes for teen age boys for a number of years. Later she taught adult Sunday School classes for women.

Smith Alexander Connell was a scholarly person who owned many books and read widely. He had several types of jobs during his career and his capacity for reading made him a talented worker.

Edward S. Comstock was an untiring civic-minded and philanthropic citizen of Las Vegas. Mary McAllister Comstock was the openhearted leader of a number of the most important civic activities in Las Vegas that needed the attention of a capable, diligent woman.

U. Leon Guy was a paratrooper during World War I and saw service in France. His lifelong hobby was searching for minerals. He had an extensive collection of mineral specimens that he had found in the mountains in the Las Vegas area. He and his wife gave the collection to New Mexico Highlands University. Mr. Guy had labeled the minerals in French. Dr. and Mrs. Valdemar Bejnar were geology teachers at the University. Mrs. Bejnar changed the labels to English. There was a surplus of some specimens, so they were able to sell the surplus to provide funds for a wider selection.

Edgar and Susie King were from very different Protestant religious backgrounds, so it was their decision to find a church where they could both feel comfortable. After shopping around, they settled on the Presbyterian Church. It was a happy choice, and both became very hardworking members. The church came first in their lives.

## CHRESTINA LAUMBACH SÁNCHEZ

*My mother, Chrestina Laumbach Sánchez, was one of the most unselfish people I have ever known. She spent a good part of her early life helping those in our neighborhood. I remember a time or two when she got up in the middle of the night because someone needed her. Antonio A. Sánchez*

Chrestina Laumbach was born and grew up in Buena Vista, near La Cueva, New Mexico, on 30 August 1881. She was the daughter of Andreas Detlief Laumbach and Leonore Ebell Laumbach. There were six girls and three boys in the family. Chrestina attended Presbyterian schools in Buena Vista and Mora. Then she attended school for two years in Santa Fe. The family were members of the First Presbyterian Church in Mora. In her early years, my mother was very active in the church. For many years she seldom missed a Sunday, and by the same token, I seldom missed Sunday school. I have many fond memories of Miss Louella Hays, who was my Sunday school teacher most of that time.



Sánchez from Rociada, New Mexico, in 1909. She lived in Las Vegas most of the time after she married. She became a member of the First Presbyterian Church in the early twenties, attended the church at Tenth and Douglas, and occasionally the Presbyterian Spanish Mission Church. I was born in October 1911, and my sister Adelina was born in

February 1913 and died in February 1920. The death of my sister was one of the worst blows my mother ever had. She never really got over it.

My mother was always active. She had a garden, mostly flowers, but also a few vegetables. Every morning, before anyone else was up, she would be puttering around in the garden. In those early years, she loved to sing while doing her housework. She had a good voice, and I still remember four songs that she often sang: "The Red River Valley," "Juanita," "The Yellow Rose of Texas" and "The Old Rugged Cross." Now, when I hear any of these songs, it brings back some of the fondest memories of my childhood; I get a feeling of loneliness--a kind of hunger.

In 1937 I and a neighbor friend about my age were going to drive to Mexico City. The new Pan-American paved highway had just been completed from Laredo, Texas, through Monterrey to Mexico City. The evening before we were to leave, mother announced that she was going along. No one had ever mentioned or even thought about my mother going.

At first, my friend and I had great misgivings. But mother had apparently decided to go with the idea of somehow protecting us from harm. As it turned out, she was a great traveling companion and we all enjoyed ourselves immensely. In later years we went back many times and we always asked her to go with us.

As my mother got older, she slowed down a lot. She never learned to drive, and the walk from Valencia Street to the Church on Douglas became more and more difficult, until she had to stop going altogether. At home she continued to be able to do pretty much as she wanted.

Chrestina Laumbach Sánchez died on 9 November 1974, at age 93.

Antonio A. Sánchez 1986

We are fortunate that Rev. Alfonso Esquibel wrote an *in Memoriam* for Chrestina Sánchez. Here is a portion of it.



*Crestina L. Sánchez gave birth to two children, Tony and Adelina. As soon as they were of age the children were enrolled in Sunday School at the First Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas, New Mexico. Their Sunday School teachers being Louella Hays and her sister. Tony joined the church in April 1925. Adelina was called to her eternal home at an early age. Mrs. Sánchez joined the church on confession of faith of October 1, 1922. She was faithful in her attendance as long as she was able as well as in her stewardship until she joined the eternal fellowship of believers in the church triumphant.*

*She had many friends. Crestina was kind to the poor and needy and many times she fed the hungry, clothed the naked, gave drink to the thirsty and housed the stranger. Before her death she was ill for a long time, but throughout all her illness she "fought the good fight and kept the faith." No doubt she must have received the welcome of*

*her Master, saying:*

**Adelina Sánchez**

*"Come ye blessed of my Father,  
inherit the Kingdom prepared  
for you from the foundation  
of the world."*

Rev. Alfonso Esquibel

## **WILLIAM MORRIS SHILLINGLAW, SR.**

***At one time Will Shillinglaw was inspired to run an ad in the local newspaper listing the Ten Commandments. No one except a few in his family knew who had done it and even the family did not know why.***

William "Will" Morris Shillinglaw, Sr. was born 30 May 1884 in Rowley, Iowa. He was the son of Colin Melville Shillinglaw and his wife Emma Viola Todd. He had four brothers and three sisters. His father was a merchant, banker and farmer.

Will grew up on a farm and completed his formal education in Iowa. He came to Las Vegas, New Mexico, in 1907. On 27 June 1908 he returned to Iowa to marry his childhood sweetheart, Gertrude Nenno. That year they came to New Mexico to make it their permanent home.

Will's first job in Las Vegas was to sell land east of town for dry farming. In those years there was more moisture and it had not yet become apparent that the area was not well suited for farming, even when irrigation water was available.



Once when his daughter-in-law, Deborah, was with him driving in the country she admired the wildflowers. Will recalled a story from his early days when he had two customers in a buggy inspecting land, and he made a casual remark about the flowers; one of the women replied, "Yes, I have counted "x" number of varieties since we closed the last gate." Deborah did not recall the number, but said it was a startling figure.

It was ironic that even with his interests in real estate Will never bought a home. The first home owned by the family was acquired some years after his son Owen had established his fuel company business. Owen was able to buy a home on Sixth Street and include it in the business assets.

Owen's

When he had his annual vacation, he would invariably attend the Denver livestock show. Usually he accompanied the stock of the Sellman brothers, who had a ranch at Watrous.

He opposed buying anything out of town and would go to great lengths to avoid an out-of-town purchase. One time he wanted to give Deborah a book, *All the Women of the Bible*, which he had seen at a Presbyterian Men's Conference. He ordered it through the Carnegie Library rather than buy it where he saw it.

**Will Shillinglaw**

Will sang in the choir of the First Presbyterian Church from 1908 until about 1963. He became a ruling elder on 6 July 1913. He served as Sunday school Superintendent in 1915, 1916, 1918-1930, and 1937, for a total of 15 years, the longest tenure of any Superintendent. In 1955 he was a delegate to the Presbytery. He was a very active and faithful member and willingly served the church wherever needed.

When Will passed away in 1967, his friend and neighbor Walter Vivian wrote his obituary:

*The death of "Bill" Shillinglaw Friday afternoon marked the passing of one of the most ardent and loyal supporters of Las Vegas.*

*This year marks his sixtieth in Las Vegas. He knew and loved Las Vegas with a deep sincerity and faith in its future. He was known to countless friends and business associates for his efforts in the development of the young struggling Las Vegas in the early years and for his unquestioned honesty and generosity to all who came to him for friendly counsel or material assistance.*

*"Bill" lived to be 83 years old. Many of his closest friends had gone on ahead of him, but he found much pleasure in recalling his earlier years and the friends who enriched his life.*

*In the years to follow the Shillinglaws raised and educated three children--Owen, Morris and Dorothy. Owen operated the Shillinglaw Fuel Company which still bears his name and his father became associated in business with him in 1938. Morris became an attorney in Las Vegas. Shillinglaw's daughter Dorothy is the wife of Roy Carlson who became the general manager of Shillinglaw Fuel Company until his retirement in 1976. Owen and Morris, as well as Mrs. Shillinglaw, preceded Mr. Shillinglaw in death--Mrs. Shillinglaw having died in 1957, Owen in 1958, and Morris in 1963.*

*Throughout his life Bill dreamed of being a rancher. His love of the land and of animals never faded, and in 1963, his eightieth year, he bought his first livestock--some cattle for which he assumed direct responsibility. His greatest personal joy in later years however, was in the ownership of a young colt--a registered Morgan--which he bought late in 1963. He began to train and develop the young horse arduously, and Las Vegans became accustomed to the familiar sight of Bill and his horse walking up and down the less-traveled streets of town as he trained "Dan" first to the halter and later to the sulky. The horse, "Reed's Flashy Dan" soon became well known in show circles, and at the time of his death, Bill had won 32 ribbons and awards in some of the stiffest competition in the Southwest through his tireless effort and love for his horse. At age 82, Bill was driving and training his horse for harness classes, working in close collaboration with another local Morgan horse lover, Dr. Wallace Beil.*

*Shillinglaw's early years were devoted to his family, his community--and his work in real estate and insurance in the Investment and Agency Corporation, and as a tireless worker in civic efforts. He was an active participant in Republican Party affairs, a loyal supporter of the YMCA.*

*Bill Shillinglaw leaves the community with hosts of friends who testify to his ageless youth in thought, action and purpose. His love for people and interest in them was evidenced by his frequent calls upon those confined to nursing homes, hospitalized by illness or bereaved in the death of loved ones.*

*Bill died as he lived--in the midst of the mainstream of life. To his last breath he was doing what he loved most--serving his community, his family and his many friends. He leaves behind a rich legacy of personal integrity and loyalty which passes now to his friends and to those in whom he inspired higher goals and greater achievements because of [his example]. (Las Vegas Daily Optic 1967)*

He accepted the challenges of his own life and, by example, taught his three children, Morris, Owen, and Dorothy. They, in turn, became outstanding citizens. The boys, both severely handicapped by arthritis, were rare individuals who overcame overwhelming adversity. Their courage, determination, and ability to excel are extraordinary and inspirational real-life stories.

Both Morris and Owen became prominent and successful businessmen in the community. Their achievements brought much joy to their father and mother, who unceasingly cared for their needs.

Morris became bedridden from arthritis by the time he was in his early twenties. He borrowed law books from an attorney friend and taught himself the law. When he became confident that he could pass the New Mexico State Bar exam he arranged to have an ambulance take him to Santa Fe. He was so crippled that he could not write with his hands, but he could push typewriter keys with one finger. Applicants were usually expected to write their answers, but an exception was made, and he was allowed to have a typewriter. He was one of the few who passed the bar exam that year. He established an office near his home and was able to move around with a walker with wheels. When he needed to go farther than to his office, his father Will would pick him up and fit him into a car. At home his father also picked him up to move him back and forth between his walker and his bed. He was completely rigid except for minor movements of head, arms and legs.

Morris became a very successful and highly respected attorney. He was a briefly a member of the House of Representatives in the New Mexico legislature and chaired or served on several important committees in 1953. In Las Vegas he was fortunate that his home was only about two blocks from his office. He must have had a similar arrangement in Santa Fe when he was a legislator and justice of the New Mexico Supreme Court. He was appointed to that office in 1958 by Governor Ed Mechem. Undoubtedly, he took his pulley arrangement to Santa Fe so he could get into and out of bed without needing the assistance of others.

Owen was seriously crippled with arthritis by the time he was 10 years old and blind during most of his adult years. In 1938, he took over a

bankrupt fuel business that had been closed for many years. The building was vacant and in a state of disrepair. He had very little money but had friends, and with his initiative and their help, he began to sell coal by phone. For the first several years his deliveryman made more money than he did. Since he was virtually blind, he memorized the phone numbers of people, who might become customers, and by diligent effort slowly built up a trade and expanded into supplying furnaces, sheet metal work, and whatever was needed to provide heat for homes.

Dorothy worked for years as a nurse in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She married Roy M. Carlson in Las Vegas. Their three children, Roy Jr., Robin and William Shillinglaw were born in Minneapolis.

After Owen's death in 1958, the Carlsons moved to Las Vegas, became members of the First Presbyterian Church, and carried on the family fuel business.

Will Shillinglaw died on 26 May 1967.

Dale B. Gerdeman 1986

### **Sources:**

Carlson, Roy M., family mementos.

*Las Vegas Daily Optic*, May 29, 1967, June 1, 1967.

Shillinglaw, Deborah M. correspondence.

## **GERTRUDE NENNO SHILLINGLAW**

***In the years when the Presbyterian Missions were very active in New Mexico, the missionaries from Chacón, Holman, etc., often came to Las Vegas. They knew that the Shillinglaw home was a place they could find shelter and rest. Gertrude became a close friend of many of the Presbyterian missionaries and visitors to the area.***

Gertrude Catherine Nenno was born in Blirstown, Iowa on 4 January 1883, the daughter of Henry J. and Emma Wagnor Nenno. She was one of five girls in the Nenno family. She attended State Teachers College in Iowa and taught school for nine years prior to her marriage to William Morris Shillinglaw in Walter, Iowa, on 27 June 1908.



and  
started teaching when she was sixteen, so must have taught at the same time she was attending college. As an experienced schoolteacher, she was determined that her children would get the best

her



possible education. Gertrude had grown up in a Roman Catholic family. Las Vegas had both a parochial Catholic school and public schools. Her choice of the public schools was reached after much soul-searching. During the several years she was making the decision, her husband, Will, remained steadfast in his faith to the First Presbyterian Church. On Sunday mornings, while he went to Sunday school and Church (he probably took the children with him, although this is not certain), she studied the Bible and wrote letters to friends and family in Iowa, and eventually she and two of her younger sisters became members of Protestant churches. We can imagine it was an agonizing decision and admire her courage in making it. When Gertrude became a Presbyterian, the record shows that there was a no more dedicated member.

Her daughter-in-law, Deborah, said she was the exact opposite of the stereotype of a mother-in-law, and told the following stories:

*On my first wedding anniversary, Owen gave me a fine electric Westminster mantle clock that chimed every quarter hour. Gertrude sniffed, "That is something he always wanted for himself." On his birthday that same month, she gave him the set of cooking utensils she thought I should have!*

*When Owen teased me about bumpy mashed potatoes, she piped up to say that the potato crop was bad that year that she couldn't get them to cook right. (Shillinglaw 1986)*

Mrs. Shillinglaw taught Sunday school for many years. Her treat for graduating classes was an invitation to her home for a waffle supper. Dale Gerdeman clearly remembers the supper as a teenager:

*Everyone was permitted to eat all they wanted, and as we know, the appetite of a teenager is unmatched. The waffle iron is still in the possession of Dorothy Shillinglaw Carlson. It has a diameter of seven inches. The homemade syrup of oranges and sugar was served hot. Never since have I tasted such good waffles and syrup. I did not win the waffle eating contest that developed but recall eating more than twenty. (Gerdeman 1986)*

In 1935 Mrs. Shillinglaw served as Program Chairman of the Ladies League of the First Presbyterian Church. In 1947 the adult Sunday school classes were segregated, with Carter Forbes teaching the Men's Fellowship and Mrs. Shillinglaw teaching the King's Daughters.

After she had been in the hospital for some surgery, shortly before her death, she asked her husband to let her off at the City Hall saying she could walk home. Everyone was astonished to find that she had gone in to renew her expiring driver's license! Although she never again used it, she did not intend to be without it.

Gertrude N. Shillinglaw died on 16 June 1957.

A portion of her obituary reads:

*Very active in civic affairs and vitally interested in community projects and improvements, Mrs. Shillinglaw was a member of the First Presbyterian Church. She was named honorary member of the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church. She was a member of King's Daughters, Ladies League, and had been both treasurer and president of the Synodical Society of the Presbyterian Church. Mrs. Shillinglaw was instrumental in the organization of the Parent-Teachers Association in Las Vegas. She served as president of many of the organizations prominent in civic affairs in Las Vegas. She was a member of the Las Vegas Woman's Club and Sororis. Mrs. Shillinglaw is survived by two sons, William Morris Shillinglaw, Jr., and Owen H. Shillinglaw, both of Las Vegas, and a daughter, Mrs. Roy M. Carlson of Minneapolis, Minnesota, and three grandchildren. (Las Vegas Daily Optic 1957).*

Dale B. Gerdeman 1986

## SMITH ALEXANDER CONNELL

***Smith A. Connell was originally a metal worker who became allergic to metal shavings and had to change occupations. He studied and qualified himself for a variety of other jobs that could use his mind and talents. He owned a fine library of books and willed them to the church.***

Smith Alexander Connell was born 12 April 1885, in Topeka, Kansas. He moved to Las Vegas, New Mexico, at around the age of three, along with his parents and sister, Lena. Four other children, Frank, Walter, Susie and Alice, were later born to his parents--Smith A. Connell and Susan Isabel Walkup Connell, who are buried in the old Masonic Cemetery in Las Vegas.



On 9 September 1908 Connell married Ruby Gertrude Schlott, whose parents were married in Las Vegas in 1885. Ruby was in the first graduating class of New Mexico Normal, later to become Highlands University. Six children were born to the couple--five sons and one daughter. Ruby Gertrude Schlott Connell died on 7 August 1950.

Connell was a machinist and tool and die maker for the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway Company. He later became head machinist and was sent to Globe, Arizona, to set up the Santa Fe Railway shops before his allergy made it necessary to find a new occupation. He took correspondence courses in accounting, auditing and bookkeeping. He became office manager of an Albuquerque department store.

In 1925 he worked as a state auditor in Albuquerque and Socorro. In 1930 **Smith Alexander** moved to Santa Fe, where he held various bookkeeping jobs.

Connell went to Iowa in 1940, and then on to other jobs during World War II: Rock Island (Illinois) arsenal, Bremerton, Washington, shipyards, and Globe Aircraft in Fort Worth. After the war, he returned to Las Vegas as a cabinetmaker, and later to Santa Fe, where he worked as a state bank examiner.

Installed as a deacon on 9 April 1947 in the First Presbyterian Church, he was also active in Masonic orders. He was a studious man, had a lifelong love of books, and had an extensive collection of books on the Southwest, which he donated to the First Presbyterian Church. Books were, at times, more important to him than even food.

He was an honest man, loved by his children, and a dear father-in-law. His daughter, Merle Charlotte, died in 1972. All of his sons are living as of

this date. His sons are: Smith A. VI; Ralph Waldo; Charles Walkup; Vernon Randolph; and James Schlott. He was also a devoted grandfather to twelve grandchildren. He died on 11 August 1960 in Albuquerque and is buried in Las Vegas.

Katherine B. Connell 1986

## EDWARD SEARLE COMSTOCK

***Edward Searle Comstock manufactured ice cream. He was active in civic affairs and in the church. The local hospital, the Synod of New Mexico, and the First Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas benefited from his will.***



**Edward & Mary Elizabeth**

Edward Searle Comstock was born in Oskaloosa, Iowa, on 14 October 1885 to William Comstock and Lillie Morris Comstock. There were three boys in the family, Edward, Arthur, and Ray. The family came to New Mexico in the early 1900s. From 1918 until retirement in 1954 Edward was co-owner of the Standard Dairy in Las Vegas.

He married Mary Elizabeth McAllister on 25 August 1909. They were both very active in church, lodge, civic, and philanthropic affairs. She died on 9

February 1948. They did not have any children. He later married Georgia Leona McIntosh, a widow.

Edward Comstock was a member of the Masonic Order and honorary Past Master of Chapman Lodge No. 2 AF & AM, a 32nd Degree Mason, a member of the Las Vegas Shrine Club, and a member of the Order of Eastern Star, Ransford Chapter No. 2. He was initiated 15 February 1909 into Las Vegas Lodge No. 4 of the Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) of the Grand Lodge of New Mexico. He served in practically every office in the local lodge and served as grand master of the Grand Lodge of New Mexico in 1928. He was also a member of Naomi Rebekah Lodge No. 1.

Edward was a past president and senior active member of the Las Vegas Rotary Club and also had served as a member of the Board of the Las Vegas Hospital.

He served the First United Presbyterian Church in many ways. He was superintendent of the Sunday school from 1909 to 1914, then again in 1917. He was installed as a ruling elder on 7 July 1912.

Most of his estate was acquired during his first marriage, and at the time of his second marriage he held the real estate as his sole and separate property. He willed his personal effects and household furnishings to his second wife and provided for her in other ways, but it was his desire that his real estate holdings, consisting of the home and the adjacent land, eventually be used as a home for a retired Presbyterian minister or ministers.

In his will, he provided that Georgia Leona Comstock have the use of the home during the balance of her lifetime; he provided that the taxes, assessments, insurance, and maintenance be paid from his estate. The balance of his trust estate was to be paid, one-half to the Relief Society of Las Vegas, which was operating the Las Vegas Hospital, and one-half to the First Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas.

If it was not found advisable to use the real estate as he desired, he made it possible for the property to be sold. The proceeds of such sale were to be used for the purchase or maintenance of a retirement home for ministers elsewhere in the State of New Mexico.

The Extension Board of the Synod of New Mexico determined that they would sell the property, and the First Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas bought it. It was later sold and the profits contributed to the 1994 addition to the church on Douglas Avenue.

Edward Searle Comstock died on 9 April 1965.

Comstock's desire for a retirement home for ministers did not work out, but his property eventually was an asset that benefited his church, and we believe he would have been happy with the outcome.

Georgia Leona Comstock died on 23 November 1983.

Dale B. Gerdeman 1985

## MARY E. McALLISTER COMSTOCK

***Mary Comstock devoted her energies to worthy causes in the community of Las Vegas for more than thirty-five years. She left her hometown better than she found it.***

Mary Elizabeth McAllister was born 14 March 1885, in Sturgeon, Missouri, the daughter of William George McAllister and Eliza Jane Long McAllister. She grew to young womanhood in Missouri, attending school at Sturgeon and Columbia. She had two brothers and two sisters. She, along with members of her family, came West for health reasons, first to Denver, and in 1908 to Las Vegas, New Mexico.

She was married to Edward S. Comstock on 25 August 1909. He was the co-owner of the Standard Dairy of Las Vegas. They had no children, and she devoted herself to taking a leading part in a variety of civic activities.

She died on 9 February 1948. A portion of her obituary in the *Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 10 February 1948, reads:

*Mrs. Comstock will be long remembered in Las Vegas for her unselfish and philanthropic work in the community. For 25 years she was a member of the Board of Directors of the Las Vegas Hospital, and for 13 years served as president of the institution. She was a devoted member of the First Presbyterian Church for nearly 40 years.*

*During World War II she was chairman of the Gray Ladies Society of the Red Cross, which ministered to hundreds of soldiers at Camp Luna and in Las Vegas during that period.*

*In 1945 Mrs. Comstock was awarded a Certificate of Honor as "The First Lady of the Year," by Beta Sigma Phi national sorority, in recognition of her outstanding services. Mrs. Mary Comstock was active in the Order of Rebekahs, as a member of Naomi Lodge No. 1 of Las Vegas. For 12 years she served as secretary of the State Assembly of that order. She was also a member of the Order of Eastern Star.*

Dale B. Gerdeman 1985

## U. LEON GUY

***Ulysses Leon Guy was the only survivor of three children. His older brother and sister developed tuberculosis, and in 1905 his parents moved the family from the Midwest to Las Vegas, hoping the high elevation and dry climate would help them recover. Sadly, both died soon after they arrived.***



**U. Leon Guy**

Ulysses Leon Guy was born on 10 September 1886, in Mount Carmel, Illinois, to George L. Guy, a schoolteacher, and Estelle Wells Guy. The youngest of three children, he graduated from high school in Waveland, Indiana.

He was in the Balloon Corps during World War I and saw service in France. Later he served as commander of the American Legion Post in Las Vegas.

Leon Guy began his business career in Las Vegas in the Bacharach Store, later going into partnership with Charles Hedgecock in the shoe business. In 1938 he became sole owner of the shoe store and continued in the business until he sold it in 1958.

On 29 June 1932, he married Vivian Oldshue in Indiana and brought her to New Mexico.

Leon Guy's hobby was searching for untapped mineral resources in the mountainous regions within one hundred miles of Las Vegas. He was not formally educated in geology but read everything he could find on the subject. He studied intensely and explored the area thoroughly. In time, he became respected throughout New Mexico, and in the mining industry as an authority on minerals in the area. He was able to find outcroppings of dozens of minerals and had the uncanny ability, years later, to relocate his find without wandering.

Climbing in the rarefied mountain air is a sure way to get out of breath. Vigorous young men who wanted to see outcroppings of minerals that Mr. Guy had located found him difficult to keep up with, as he had developed remarkable strength and stamina in his years of climbing and walking throughout the region.

Among mineral specimens Leon Guy found in plentiful quantities were: vermiculite--sugar and flake varieties; lepidolite--lithia mica; iron--hematite and limonite; uranium ore--carnotite and vanadium; agate--camelian and quartzite (semi-precious gem stones); bauxite; barium; mica--scrap and sheet; pitchblende; sand and gravel; asbestos--short fiber; lead; gypsum; clays--bentonite and aluminum and fire clay; molybdenum;

lime-98.7% calcium carbonate. Among specimens he found in minor quantities were beryllium, coal, gold, barite, and silver.

His studies led him to believe that complex ores, namely, gold, silver, lead and zinc were to be found in this area at levels from the surface down to 1200 feet. In the early 1930s, Mr. Guy filed a claim on his discovery of a rich deposit of granite in the mountains of the upper Gallinas Canyon.

In addition to his personal interest in the development of his findings, he had a strong desire to see new industry come into the community to provide employment for Las Vegas. When it appeared that one of his finds might be the basis of a new industry, he was generous in inviting friends to share the benefits with him.

Dale Gerdeman writes:

*My brother Bill and I and several other friends were the beneficiaries of his unfailing enthusiasm and hope for a worthwhile new industry. At his suggestion we recorded mineral rights on some discoveries he had made.*

He was able to interest some men from the East Coast to set up a granite cutting and polishing operation at Camp Luna, where the Chamber of Commerce had hopes of establishing an industrial park. For a time, tombstones were made and shipped from this plant. However, the small industry was never able to overcome the disadvantage of being in competition with bigger companies, partially because of high freight costs out of Las Vegas to large markets.

Leon and his wife Vivian maintained a lovely home and yard. Their friends included many of the young children in the neighborhood as well as young adults and older people of the area. The Guys were active members of the First Presbyterian Church throughout their lives. Leon sang in the choir for many years and was a ruling elder, having been installed 1 July 1941.

He continued his interest in the life and growth of the community until illness forced him to be hospitalized late in 1967.

Leon Guy died on 28 May 1968.

Dale B. Gerdeman 1987



## VIVIAN OLDSHUE GUY

***When Vivian O. Guy became a widow, she moved to Indiana. She had owned an exceptionally nice home and adjacent rental property on 6<sup>th</sup> Street in Las Vegas and offered the First Presbyterian Church the two properties at about half of their market value. The church accepted the offer and sold the rental property. The result was that the church obtained the Guy home at a very nominal cost and used it as the manse.***

Vivian Oldshue was born on 25 December 1886 in Waveland, Indiana, the daughter of James Edward Oldshue and his wife, Emma Blanche Jaruis. She had two sisters, Grace (Mrs. Edward Handcock) and Virginia Mary (Mrs. Foster R. Glover). Her education included two years at Western College, a girls' school at Oxford, Ohio, and two years at Herron Art Institute in Indianapolis. She was an accomplished China painter, and her niece, Mrs. Arthur J. Hayes, has a beautiful tea set that she painted.



was  
June 1932. She joined him in the management of  
Guy's Shoe Store.

*Vivian was short of stature and soft voiced, but impressive in her generosity and geniality. She was a lady in the true sense of the word exemplified by her generation—kind, thoughtful, gentle and well mannered.*

*A gracious hostess she frequently enjoyed entertaining. In her lovely home were displayed beautiful works of art including china she had hand painted. When she closed her Las Vegas home and moved to the Midwest, she gave each of her friends a piece of her hand-painted china.*

*She delighted in working in her garden that was a showplace. But even more she liked giving away plants to friends and acquaintances. Many gardens in Las Vegas were enhanced by acquisitions from Vivian Guy's garden. (Detterick, 2000)*

The Guys were devoted members of the First Presbyterian Church. Mrs. Guy was also active in the Las Vegas Garden Club, Chapter H of the P.E.O., and served on the board of the Las Vegas Hospital during the time that the new hospital was being built. In 1974 Vivian Guy was presented with an honorary member pin from the Las Vegas Presbyterian Women's Association (now Presbyterian Women). Mrs. Martha Hayes and her sister, Blanche, gave a reception at the Wesley Manor to mark the occasion.

After her husband died in 1968, Mrs. Guy decided she should move into the Wesley Manor Health Center in Frankfort, Indiana, where she could be near her closest relatives, a niece and nephew.

The current Presbyterian minister, Al Juterbock, his wife, Dorothy, and their children were living in rental property the Guys owned next to their home. The Juterbock family was too large for the small manse the church owned at that time. Mrs. Guy offered her very nice home and adjacent rental property to the church at about half of their market value. The church accepted and sold the rental property for nearly enough to offset the cost of both properties and, as a result, obtained the Guy home at a nominal cost. Rev. Juterbock and his family were the first to live in the newly acquired, much larger manse.

Vivian O. Guy died on 5 July 1981.

Dale B. Gerdeman 1987

From Rev. Al Juterbock:

*Every time we went east, we visited Vivian. She was about 50 miles from the Veterans Hospital where my father was. She was always a delightful hostess. She had her own room with a bachelorette and bath. She would have us sit down, have tea, cookies or cake, and ice cream. Her family had the local ice cream factory and they always had her supplied.*

*As she got older, she was moved to a "full care" room. Her memory was not good. One time she complained "that no one came to visit her". The nurse said that her niece came every day and had just been there 30 minutes before we arrived.*

*When she died the family contacted me (I was on disability then, I think) and we had a service for her in the Chapel of the Methodist Manor of Frankfort, Indiana. (Wesley Manor) After we retired we discovered a box of photos from the time when she lived in Las Vegas. We took it to the niece's house and heard no more of it.*

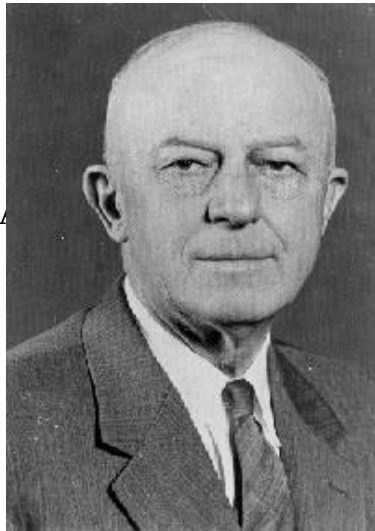
*The manse (1215 6<sup>th</sup> Street) had the chandeliers (four of them) that she brought with her from Ohio to New Mexico. The box that I mentioned was found in the linen cabinet in the bathroom under a drawer. Dorothy found it when she took the drawer out to clean it before we left. The back yard was beautiful. We had a graduation party in it for a next-door neighbor.*

*P.S. The word "manse" was the Scots term for the housing of the pastor. It comes from the Scripture, "In my Father's house are many mansions." and was described as the place "the congregation used to prepare for the Lord." Vivian's home served us well and it was an appropriate "manse". Most of the board meetings, Sessions and deacons plus confirmation classes met there.*

## ALVIN HENRY GERDEMAN

As President of the Las Vegas Savings Bank from 1949 to 1959, A. H. Gerdeman became known for his sincere interest in knowing and serving the people of Las Vegas. He was an active member of the First Presbyterian Church. Milton Nahm, author of *Las Vegas and Uncle Joe*, said "There was no more honorable man than Al Gerdeman."

Alvin H. "Al" Gerdeman was born 14 July 1888 in Pendleton, Warren County, Missouri, the son of Herman H. Gerdemann and Mary Wessendorf Gerdemann. (Al dropped the final "n" for ease in spelling.) He graduated from Central Wesleyan College and the Gem City Business College in



Quincy, Illinois. Al moved to Oklahoma to become a bookkeeper in the National Bank of Anadarko where he was known as a very productive employee. It was said after he left, they had to hire five employees to replace him. He quit the bank to become County Treasurer of Caddo County, Oklahoma.

married

1916. At that time, Fern's cousin Emory Carson, worked in a bank in El Centro, California. Carson offered Al a job in El Centro if he could arrive a few days after the wedding ceremony. Al accepted and they made a hurried trip to El Centro. Soon after Al feared that he had developed tuberculosis, and in the spring of 1917 the young couple moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico, where Al was treated at the Albuquerque Sanatorium.

**Alvin Henry** Offered a banking job in Las Vegas in 1918, Al and Fern shipped their worldly goods by rail at a cost of \$3.32, including 10 cents war tax. Their first child Dale was born in Albuquerque and the younger five children in Las Vegas, where the couple made their permanent home.

In the early 1900s, Las Vegas was the commercial center of the state. Al began work at the Peoples Bank and Trust Company, one of five local banks, but became dissatisfied with management and moved to the Las Vegas Savings Bank in 1920. Attorney William G. Haydon was president, and George A. Fleming, who owned a real estate and insurance business, was vice president. They were both fully occupied with their own affairs and hired Al Gerdeman to be the cashier and only employee of the bank.

In 1925 the other four banks failed and the Las Vegas Savings Bank became the only bank in town until 1949. In 1928 the thriving bank moved from a small building on 6<sup>th</sup> Street into the vacant First National Bank of Las Vegas building, a beautiful marble and limestone structure built five

years earlier. Its name was changed in 1960 to The Bank of Las Vegas, which it remains today.

William Haydon died in 1937 and was succeeded as president by George Fleming. In 1949 Fleming became chairman of the board and Al was elevated to the presidency. Al Gerdeman's character, temperament and talents equipped him well for his role as a banker during troubled times. He had tremendous self-confidence and the ability to project it. He had presence of mind under difficult and adverse conditions. He liked to get well acquainted with people and was sincerely interested in each individual. He would ask many questions; he listened, and he remembered. Believing his responsibility was to serve people, he was determined that the bank be a haven for people of all walks of life. Profitability was secondary. His remarkable unselfishness carried over into his business philosophy.

The bank examiners were not inclined to appreciate too much of this type of operation. They would recommend changes that would improve the operation of the bank. Al Gerdeman could be a stubborn adversary if he thought a change might eliminate the bank as a haven for people he knew and trusted. He had the ability to correctly evaluate circumstances and individuals. His advice was sought and valued. He had a loyal following throughout the trade area.

Because of his youthful appearance Al Gerdeman was referred to as the "kid banker" by his colleagues in the New Mexico Bankers Association, which he served in a number of capacities, including as president in 1927-1928. Al's upbringing on a farm gave him to a lifetime interest in farming. He enjoyed hard work. His early years on a farm developed the habit of hard work and it stayed with him until his death in 1959. He had a tremendous amount of energy the ability to accomplish a lot in a little time. San Miguel County records show an amazing number of real estate transactions and acquisition of mineral rights. It is a mystery how he did this in addition to running the bank and farming before and after a full day at the bank. Al regularly ate lunch with two attorneys, Waldo Spiess and M. E. "Zig" Noble. After he put in a day's work at the bank, he would return to the farm and work until dark. He never retired but after he sold his farming interests, he slowed down from the 12 to 14-hour days, and often went to the S & S Club to socialize with a group of men who congregated there. The company was the main attraction. The drinking and card playing held no appeal.

An item in the 11 January 1963, Las Vegas Daily Optic about Al Gerdeman stated:

*He and his associates in the bank obviously engendered the confidence of the community. He was a dynamic leader during hard times. Confidence was essential. All other banks passed out of existence, leaving The Bank of Las Vegas alone in the field*

*for a number of years. It has always operated with substantial liquid assets. Its ability to weather the economic storms-emerging stronger and sounder from each brush with adversity-are evidence that it has a firm foundation and has followed ethical business practices.*

Many of Al's friends have also left a record of comments:

William Rose, a railroader:

*I wanted a loan for a venture, but he turned me down and explained why. I was unhappy at the time, but I found out later how right he was. I not only would have lost my savings but would have been in debt as well. It was the best thing that ever happened to me.*

J. Warren Shoemaker, Al's close friend and the owner of a large ranch:

*While he was working for the Peoples Bank and Trust Company, he developed a great confidence in me. I was heavily in debt. The bank was pressing me to pay them off, which I could not do. When Al moved to The Las Vegas Savings Bank, he convinced his new associates that they should invite me to become their customer and borrow from them. Time proved his confidence was justified, as I got out of debt and became a loyal supporter of the bank. Al was the greatest man I ever knew.*

Dr. James M. Cook, president of the Montezuma Baptist College, remembered:

*I came to town to make a deposit and saw a long line--there was a run on The Las Vegas Savings Bank. At that time, it occupied the small building on Sixth Street, and there was only one teller's window. Al Gerdeman was handling the situation with great confidence. He apparently had anticipated that there might be a run and had money piled high so all could see there was plenty available. I and others who had planned to make deposits joined in the line and said we were still planning to put our money in the bank. Some people, who had just drawn their money out, stepped back into the line to return their funds. When those in the line, and others who had come to draw out their funds, found so many depositors in line, the run disintegrated.*

Milton Taichert, a merchant, knew Al for many years:

*In 1925, we had bought some wool on commission from the Chicago Wool Company, and my brother, Joe, went to Holbrook, Arizona, to see about the wool. He planned to draw a draft to pay for the wool. I walked out of our store and passed the Peoples Bank and saw a bunch of people standing outside the bank. It was closed, so I went back to the store. I called Joe and told him, "You cannot make a draft on the bank now; they have closed." Four banks closed here at one time. We didn't do business with The Las Vegas Savings Bank, but they were the only one that was left open. So, I went in and talked to Al Gerdeman. He said, "I don't know whether we will have a run on our bank, but we will do it," so I called Joe back, and told him to draw the draft for \$13,000.00 on The Las Vegas Savings Bank. Gerdeman was a very good banker. He*

*knew a deal...if it was a good deal or not. We went to him many times for advice. It always worked out beautifully.*

Joe Torres, a businessman and rancher, remembered:

*Al went before daylight to his farm. When he came back to town, he would often be wearing muddy boots, an old hat and jacket, and would sit with a group of friends for an early cup of coffee. Al was just one of the boys. He could change from being a very common person, with his very common friends, to being quite capable of dealing in the bank with the "silk stocking crowd." He was a very sociable person. I would not have been the business success I was, had it not been for Al Gerdeman. Over the years he developed a great deal of confidence in me, and he went beyond what a banker would ordinarily do to encourage me and help me to grow in my business. My contacts in business gave me opportunities, and I could buy things at a bargain, and if I was confident, I would be able to sell in a short time, I had a loan arrangement with him that made the business possible. It was my practice to consult with Al whenever I bought something which might be a little bit out of the ordinary, or if I needed advice. I had powerful friends in Santa Fe and was able to bid on large purchases made by the state. When I was the successful bidder, I always needed a loan. I sold the state great quantities of antifreeze, tires, barbed wire, etc.*

An active member of the First Presbyterian Church, Al was installed as a ruling elder on 1 July 1922. In September 1934, he served on a committee to consider whether the church should merge with the Christian Church. The merger was declined. In 1935 he served on the pulpit supply committee that chose Rev. F. Homer Tegler as minister.

Al was also active in the Kiwanis Club, the Elks, and served on the Las Vegas City School Board. He was Chairman of the Board of Regents of New Mexico Normal (now Highlands) University during the administration of Governor Thomas Mabry.

Al Gerdeman died on 9 December 1959, following a brief illness, and was buried in the family plot in the Masonic Cemetery in Las Vegas.

Dale B. Gerdeman 1989

## FERN BROOKE GERDEMAN

*During the Great Depression, out-of-work hitchhikers passed the word around that "The lady in the brick house on the corner of Washington and Third Street would help with something to eat." Fern Gerdeman's children remember singing songs at the piano as she played. She was a member of the Presbyterian Women's Association called the King's Daughters.*

Fern Millicent Brooke was born in Anadarko, Oklahoma, on 23 February 1895, the daughter of Thomas Hudson Brooke and his second wife Amanda Dale. Fern's little sister Lyle Maxine died as a baby. Thomas Brooke was



first married to Susan Sturm, who died in 1892. Of their four children, only Flora Mae survived to adulthood. Flora married an engineer, Rodney Barnes, who died shortly after their marriage, and she remained a widow. She was twenty-two years old when Fern was born, and she took a great interest in her half-sister and was much beloved by all the members of the family.

Brooke

he served as a telegraph operator in the Military Telegraph Corps of the Army of the United States. He was captured but later released. After the war he worked for Western Union as a railroad telegrapher until he died. He was talented at writing and wrote of his war experiences for the Telegraph and Telephone Age periodical.

Fern remembered many times when her father would sit on their porch and children would gather, as he was a good storyteller. When Thomas Brooke's hard-earned furniture store burned to the ground, he returned to his job at Western Union, where he worked until his death at age 77.

Thomas and Amanda did not have many possessions but managed to buy a piano and give Fern piano lessons. She mentioned in a letter to her parents years later how much she appreciated their sacrifice in providing her lessons. In her last years, Fern continued to play piano despite crippling arthritis in her hands. Music was an important part of her life and her children's growing years.

Fern graduated from Anadarko High School and received a first grade teaching certificate from County Normal. She taught school in Apache, Oklahoma, for two years. She stayed with a couple who lived several miles from the school and rode horseback back and forth each school day.

Fern was a beautiful young lady and had a number of suitors before she married Al Gerdeman in 1916. After a brief stay in El Centro California, the young couple rented a house in Albuquerque. Al's brother and sister, Will and Marie, came to live with them for a time. They all became close friends of neighbors, Addie L. Muggley, and her husband, who was a carpenter. The friendship continued until both the Muggleys died.

The Gerdeman's first child, Dale, was born in Albuquerque. Five other children, Mary Jo, Bill, Elizabeth (Betty) Ann, Donna Jean, and Jim, were born in Las Vegas. Tragically, Betty Ann died at age three.

The Gerdemans bought a large, two-story brick home at 1004 Third Street, where they lived for many years, often visited by Fern's mother.

Dale remembers,

We were expected to go to Sunday school, and we all enjoyed it. We had excellent teachers. When

*Mother's children were grown, she had time to do other things, and joined the Presbyterian Women's Association, the King's Daughters. When asked to be the leader, she was unsure of herself but glad to have the opportunity to take the office. Time proved that there was no need for her to be unsure of herself. It was just the fact that she had not done anything of that nature previously.*

Bill describes some of his memories:

*Mother encouraged us in our friendships with others in the neighborhood, at church, and at school. Dad gave me a horse to care for and ride when I was eleven years old. Mother loved to ride; she used to ride when she taught school. She rode Lady around the neighborhood. In 1942 we moved Lady to the farm and Mother then enjoyed riding around among the farms on the Storrie Project. Lady wasn't ridden for a couple of years while I was in the military service but when I returned Mother was anxious to start riding again. Lady loved to race and caught Mother off guard when she gave Lady the reins. That surge threw Mother back onto the cantle and injured her tailbone, which bothered her for years afterward. It didn't stop her from riding though.*

*When Dad passed away in 1959 it was quite hard for Mother to accept. She gradually got involved again with the community groups and friends she had known so well. In her later years she had arthritis that crippled her hands and knees and she had other physical problems but she was not a complainer nor was she grumpy.*

Donna Jean describes some early memories:

*I was possibly three or four years old when I asked my parents "Who is God?" I was told that God made everything, he loved me and that he was very very good. I then asked if God was good like them. Their answer was, "Oh no, God is far better than we are. He is perfect in every way." I remember puzzling over this and wondering how that could be.*



*When I was in grade school mention had been made in class about Jews. Jews? Who were Jews?*

*So of course, when I got home I asked about Jews. I was told that they were very special because they were God's chosen people and they were the apple of God's eye. I remember how this impressed me and from that time I have held Jews in high regard.*

*One year for Christmas I received a dollhouse. I was thrilled I could hardly wait to play with it. It just so happened Christmas fell on Sunday that year. After opening our presents and having breakfast we were told to get ready for Sunday school and church. We were going to Sunday school and church? But this was Christmas and I wanted to stay home and play with my new dollhouse. No, we were going to church I would have plenty of time to play with my dollhouse when we got home. Though I was immensely disappointed, off to church we went. As Sunday school progressed and I heard again the story of the baby Jesus I remember thinking how glad I was to be in Sunday school.*

Fern Brooke Gerdeman died on 14 April 1979.

Dale B. Gerdeman 1989, William A. Gerdeman and Donna Jean Hays 2001

## SUSIE C. AND EDGAR C. KING

*The King household became a way station for missionaries serving rural northern New Mexico who came into town for supplies or recreation. They knew they were free to drop in on Susie and Edgar. Often the mission supplies ordered from out of town were shipped to the Kings and remained there until they could be picked up.*

Susie Connell was born 5 September 1893 in Las Vegas, New Mexico, where her father had come to superintend the building of the power plant at the Las Vegas Medical Center. As a native-born Las Vegan she was one of a rather select group, as most Anglos had come to the area from other parts of the country. She was a younger sister of Smith Alexander Connell.

Susie's schooling was all in Las Vegas. She was in a class of only sixteen pupils at Castle High School. They were a very tight-knit group, and many of them kept in touch for most of their lifetimes. One of her classmates was Thomas Truder, who later became a prominent lawyer and mayor of Las Vegas. One of her teachers was Adolphine S. Kohn, the long-time organist at the First Presbyterian Church.

In her early life, Susie was a tomboy and always ready for any kind of fun. In high school she was active on all the teams, but basketball was the game she liked best. After graduation, she attended Normal University in Las Vegas for one year.



following

Gallinas Canyon, as the schools were too far for their children to attend. This life suited her admirably, as she was able to hike and ride horses to her heart's content. This was followed by several years of teaching in Wagon Mound, where she also was able to enjoy an outdoor life.

World War I brought Susie back to Las Vegas where she went to work for the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway after many of the men were called into service. This job was relinquished when the men were released from military service. One of the ex-servicemen transferred to Las Vegas from Texas as the freight and passenger agent was Edgar C. King. It was not long before the two were married.

Edgar C. King was born 20 June 1891. He and Susie came from very different Protestant religious backgrounds so they decided to find a church where they could both feel comfortable. After shopping around they settled on the First Presbyterian Church. It was a happy choice, and both became very active members.

**Edgar C. & Susie C. King**

In church work, Edgar was the quiet one but in his own way he served as fully as Susie, who was involved in many activities. She sang in the choir, taught Sunday school and was a member of King's Daughters and vice president of the Ladies' League. One of her deepest interests, however, was missions, particularly the Plaza mission schools within driving distance of Las Vegas, Holman and Chacón.

When Holman and Chacón missionaries would take a trip they often stayed overnight at the King's to catch the bus or train the following day. A new teacher arriving by train would be met by Edgar and conveyed to their home to stay until others could pick her up.

Each summer, all the teachers in Chacón left at the same time for a month's vacation. Susie and her two children would then move into the mission house so that some of the services provided by the station could be maintained. For instance, the mission house had the only telephone in the Chacón Valley, so it was important that this vital link to the outside be kept available, especially in the event of medical emergencies. Also, Susie kept the Sunday school classes going in the mission house.

In addition, whenever mission speakers came to present the service at the First Presbyterian Church, the pastor always knew he could count on overnight housing and a good breakfast at the King household. During World War II when the military base at Camp Luna was established, every soldier who attended First Presbyterian Church services was asked to Sunday dinner. Susie developed friendships from all over the country and many of these young men stayed in touch with her until her death.

Susie was a marvelous cook. She was particularly noted for her homemade rolls, and whenever there was a potluck at the church, everyone counted on her to bring the rolls. She also had a lifetime love of learning and took every opportunity to increase her knowledge. As a result, she probably had as well rounded an education as many college graduates. In her later years, she loved to play Scrabble and was practically unbeatable at the game.

Susie also had a great sense of justice. Whenever she felt people were underdogs, she became outspoken in defense of their rights. She was also truly color-blind and all races were welcomed into her home at a time when this was unusual. Edgar, too, was remarkably free of prejudice. At times Susie upset people by her outspoken views but this never prevented her from voicing them.

Edgar C. King died in Las Vegas on 18 February 1952. Several years later, Susie moved to El Monte, California to be near her daughter. Upon arrival, she joined the local First Presbyterian Church and became as active as she had been in Las Vegas. She died 15 January 1960 in El Monte, California.

Charlene L. Shupp, a niece of Susie Connell King, has given us a marvelously intimate view of Susie:

*Aunt Susie was neither pretty nor homely--just in-between; but a pair of large and expressive brown eyes and her halo of white hair made her attractive. She was immaculate and meticulously dressed, but her clothes were simple and usually hand-sewn, for Aunt Susie could tailor like a professional and dress-make equally well.*

*Aunt Susie's many talents were domestic, and she was a perfectionist. She did not write poetry or prose, paint pictures or play the piano, like Mom (Alice Connell Shupp) did, but her painting of woodwork or of a piece of old furniture proved she could apply the paint her way as well as Mom could do as an artist.*

*One could see the art in Aunt Susie coming out particularly at Christmas time, and lucky was the individual who got a holiday glimpse of Aunt Susie at her best. Her house featured bright Christmas lights set in garlands of greens. The rooms were fragrant with the spice of Christmas cooking and the smell of evergreens-pine, juniper, and the red-berried kinnikinnick from our New Mexico mountains. There were beautiful and amusing Christmas candles set in the midst of the Christmas greens. The table was set for the Christmas feast with snow-white linen, sparkling silver, clear-as-air crystal. Everything to make up the Christmas meal and cooked with the perfection that was Aunt Susie's standard. The meal was served by Uncle Edgar at the head of the table after he said Grace.*

*On every holiday or Sunday at Aunt Susie's one or two guests--the lonely--were invited to dinner. One who was often there to eat with us was a little old lady in Aunt Susie's church who was very poor and on welfare--she was as welcome to a holiday dinner at Aunt Susie's as anyone else. The most delightful thing about Aunt Susie was her never-ending interest in old folks and children, for I was a child those several years, and always there would be a valentine, an Easter bunny, a Halloween witch, a birthday box and another at Christmas. Aunt Susie somehow remembered all of those in her circle of acquaintances. There was a very old member of Aunt Susie's church circle who liked to attend the ladies' meetings. Regardless of weather, Aunt Susie went into the country to get this aged member and bring her in to have her bit of social and religious uplift.*

*The world would be better off if there were more Aunt Susies.*

Dorothy King Walters, Charleen L. Shupp and Dale B. Gerdeman 1986

## PAUL DOWNER HENRY

***Paul D. Henry loved to sing and had a wonderful baritone voice. He had more than his shares of hard knocks but was always a cheerful optimist who was greatly loved by his family and friends.***

Paul Downer Henry ("Doc") was born 27 June 1896 in Xenia, Illinois, to Reverend John D. Henry and Amy B. Downer Henry. He had an older brother, Fay, and a younger brother, Ross. Paul's mother died on 26 August 1901, when he was five years old. On 25 October 1904, his father married



Ella Jane Foster, a widow with one son, Walter, and one daughter, Leora. About two years later, the family moved to Gunnison, Colorado. During these early years, the family lived in Gunnison, Delta, and Ft. Collins. In Gunnison, at the age of nine, Paul was already working on a hay ranch as a "stacker boy." Somewhere around 1910 Paul's younger brother, Ross, died of complications from severe diabetes.

In 1912 the family moved to Deming, New Mexico, where Rev. John Henry had acquired and was homesteading a desert claim. In addition to helping his father, Paul again labored on neighboring ranches. These were lean years of struggle and hardship, but the boy learned strength and the value of life and hard work. He later told his children and grandchildren about the clothes they had to wear from "missionary barrels" sent to his family. His

**Paul D. Henry** father served as Sunday school missionary for Rio Grande Presbytery until 1926 when he became a state missionary and "circuit rider." Circuit riders were missionaries who traveled by horseback to isolated places all across the Southwest, sleeping under the stars by night, cooking over camp fires, and bringing the Word of God to those in far and lonely places. Rev. John Henry retired in 1935 but remained active in local mission work. He established and directed the Armijo Mission sponsored by the First Presbyterian Church. Rev. Henry died in Albuquerque on 18 April 1939, and at his funeral service in Deming, New Mexico, Ralph J. Hall, who was also a circuit rider missionary, gave a very moving tribute to him:

*Truly he was one of the Lord's choicest spirits. He more constantly exemplified the loving spirit of our Lord than any I have ever known. He was so constantly meek and loving, always consecrated and devoted. His life was so void of all malice and envy. Truly to know him was to love him. I think he was the most universally loved man in the ministry I have ever known. Wherever I go through the Southwest--out in the little school houses, on the prairie, in the humblest and finest homes, in the cities, and in the lumber camps tucked far away in hidden mountain canyons, I am asked the same*

*questions, "How is Uncle John, and when is he coming to see us?" And more often I am asked these questions by young people than by older groups. How they loved him and how he loved them. It was always a great day in a home when Uncle John came.*

Paul graduated from Deming High School on 23 May 1916. That summer when Pancho Villa crossed the U.S. border and raided Columbus, New Mexico, Paul was driving a supply truck for the U.S. Army and witnessed the aftermath of Villa's raid on Columbus. He earned enough money that summer to begin his higher education at Loyola University School of Dentistry in New Orleans that fall.

Paul worked the following summer for the Nesch Sanitary Bakery in Deming driving a delivery truck. In the fall of 1918, he transferred to the Tulane University School of Dentistry in New Orleans. During the remainder of his time at Tulane he worked part time as a chauffeur for a rich widow and as a janitor for several churches to help pay for his education. His older brother Fay also helped him some with finances. While he was in school Paul was a member of the Student's Army Training Corporation. In 1925 he was appointed first Lieutenant, Dental in the Army Reserves. Paul graduated with the degree of Doctor of Dental Surgery from Tulane on 12 June 1919.

The young Dr. Henry took his drills to the then booming mining town of Dawson, New Mexico, near Raton. During his school years in New Orleans, Paul courted a young lady by the name of Anna May Bowles. In the fall of 1919 he traveled back to New Orleans and he and Anna May were married on October 16. They lived for a short time in Dawson. In 1920 they moved to Wagon Mound, and he practiced dentistry there and in Watrous, Roy, Mora and other smaller communities.

He recalled:

*I traveled to all those towns and usually worked out of a medical doctor's office while he was on house calls. We used to get a dollar for a tooth extraction, fifty cents for children, two dollars for a silver or gold filling in those days...we could make an excellent set of dentures for about fifty dollars, and they were good dentures. When I started in business, I had to pump the drill with my foot, and that was often very painful to the patient.*

His old foot pedal drill is now at the Rough Riders Museum.

The travel was taking him away from home too much, so in 1921 Paul and Anna May moved to Las Vegas. They lived in an apartment in the old Plaza Hotel, and he had an office in the Romero Block. Later Paul moved his office above the old Montgomery Ward building (torn down many years later and rebuilt as part of the Bank of Las Vegas) where he practiced until he purchased the Christian Science reading building on Seventh Street and remodeled it for his office.

Paul and Anna May, tiring of apartment living, rented a house at 1212 Seventh Street where Paul Downer Henry, Jr. was born on 11 March 1924. They lived there only one year, then purchased the house next door, 1210 Seventh Street, where Robert John was born on 13 August 1925. In 1926 Paul purchased a two story brick home at 1026 Eighth Street and moved his family there. This was to remain the family home until he sold it in 1957.

The next ten years were busy for the Henrys--Anna May was occupied with taking care of two growing boys and Paul was working to build up his dental practice. Paul was elected president of the New Mexico State Dental Society in 1934 and the state meeting was held in Las Vegas that year. Paul said, "I worked hard at getting a good attendance and we got it...eleven dentists were on hand and that was about half of all the dentists in the state."

Paul was appointed in 1940 by Governor John E. Miles to serve on the Medical Advisory Board, Las Vegas District, and became president of the Santa Fe District Dental Society in 1950.

Anna May suffered a nervous breakdown and was hospitalized in a private hospital in Colorado Springs in 1935. Her condition did not improve, and she was to remain there until her death twenty years later. Anna May's mother, Mrs. Robert H. Bowles ("May", as she was known to everyone, or "Ma Bowles" as she became known to the boys' friends) came to Las Vegas from New Orleans to help Paul care for the boys. May Bowles became mother and grandmother to Paul Jr. and Robert and remained in Las Vegas until her death in 1957.

These were hard years for Paul, with his wife hospitalized and not improving, but he was involved in many community affairs and kept busy. He had joined the First Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas in June of 1922 and was active in the affairs of the church for many years. He was an elder from 1938 to 1959, served on the Board of Deacons from 1945 to 1951, and was also on the Board of Trustees. May Bowles was also active in the church and was a member of the King's Daughters for many years, and the boys attended church and church school, too. "Doc" sang solos when both his grandsons, Robert J. and Philip, were installed in DeMolay.

Paul was a devoted father who went everywhere with the boys. The boys were active in many sports and he took miles of home movie film of football, track meets, skiing, swimming, etc. Paul was also a sportsman himself. He enjoyed hunting, bowling, and golfing, but his big love was fishing, and the whole family spent many lazy weekend days fishing and picnicking at the nearby mountain streams. He was a familiar figure in his old fishing hat and leather jacket to all the landowners along the Gallinas, Mora, Rio de la Casa, and the Sapello Rivers; and they all welcomed him on their lands. The family had a small cabin on the Gallinas River for a time and Paul and his young sons and their friends spent many hours there.

Dr. Henry belonged to many organizations throughout the years—Kiwanis Club, Rotary Club, Elks Club, Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce, etc. He became a member of the Masonic Lodge in 1920, the Scottish Rite in 1928, then a noble of the Mystic Shrine in Ballut Abyad Temple of Albuquerque in 1940. He was very happy when both boys later became Masons and joined the Shrine, and also when his grandson, Robert Jr., became a Mason in 1975.

Paul Jr. joined the Air Force in 1942, and Robert followed suit in 1943. During World War II, with both boys in the service, Paul was kept busier than ever at home. He served on the Selective Service Board and received certificates of commendation from Presidents F. D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman. When the Air Transport Command came to Camp Luna, it didn't have a dentist on base at first, so Paul spent many evenings after regular working hours trying to take care of as many dental problems for the personnel as he could. Later when the dental personnel arrived they lacked equipment on base, so he offered the use of his office. For a time his office became so busy it looked as though he might be pushed out altogether!

Paul Jr. married Helen F. Blakely, from Albion, Nebraska, in the Henry family home in Las Vegas on 31 January 1944 and left shortly thereafter for the Aleutian Islands where he was stationed until the end of the war. Robert spent the last year of the war in the Philippine Islands. Both Paul Jr. and Robert came back to Las Vegas after the war and began their pre-dental studies at Highlands University. Robert John and Nada Carol (Kay) Spivey were married on 7 June 1947 in the First Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas.

Both Paul Jr. and Robert entered Baylor University College of Dentistry in July of 1949. By Christmas of that year Paul Jr. realized that the tedious work of dentistry was not for him, so he did not return after the holidays. Instead he taught school for a time, then kept his hand in the dental field and went on to become regional sales manager for Midwest American, dental division of American Hospital Supply Corporation. Paul Jr. died at the age of 52 in San Jose, California. He and Helen had two girls, Pamela Ann and Deborah Sue.

Robert went on to finish at Baylor University and joined his father in practice in 1952. They worked together for 21 years until Paul retired in 1973. Robert and Kay had three children: Robert John Jr., Philip Ross, and Carol Dee.

Paul was first elected to the Las Vegas Board of Education in February of 1941. He was elected president of the board in March 1941 and served as president until March 1951 when he asked to be relieved of that office. He was re-elected for his second six-year term on the board in 1947 and for his third six-year term in 1953. In 1954, the newly completed elementary school was named for him. He went on to serve for thirty consecutive years on the board of education. During that time, he also served for several years on the State Interim Finance Committee. On 11



November 1986 Paul was honored with a reception and rededication of the Paul D. Henry School. He toured all the classrooms and was greeted by the students and faculty.

On 14 May 1960 Paul married Dora E. Gaines Robertson and now had an extended family for she had three children: Beverly, Walter, and Harold. Dora was an accomplished musician and her musical talents were a great enjoyment to her family and friends. She played the piano and organ and often served as a substitute organist at her own Methodist Church as well as at Paul's First Presbyterian Church. It was only natural that she would accompany Paul as he sang, and they shared their love of music with friends and family everywhere.

When he retired in 1973 after fifty-four years in his dental practice Paul wasn't ready to be idle. He still loved to fish and play golf and he became interested in several new hobbies. He hooked pillows and rugs by the dozens and tried his hand at oil painting. Then he became very interested in sculpture and developed a style of his own, a rather primitive, rural Americana style. A number of his works were bronzed in limited editions--some sold, but mostly he gave them away; and they are now prized possessions of family members and a few friends.

With all the years of church going that Paul did, first as a "preacher's kid" and then in the years in his own church, he never got used to sitting through long-winded sermons. He wiggled and squirmed and when it got just too long, he looked at his watch and sighed so loudly everyone, including the preacher, knew it was past time to go home.

Even though Paul could never have been a minister like his father, he lived as Christian a life as any person. He was a loving husband and father; he dedicated himself to his profession; and he gave unselfishly of his time and talent to the church and the community. He was never a complainer but was a very good-natured fellow who loved life and he always turned a happy face to the world. He loved a good joke; he was a kind and honest man; and, most importantly he loved greatly and was much loved in return.

Dora died in February 1976 and Paul became ill with cancer shortly after that. Paul Jr. died in September of that same year. All this sadness in Paul's life, together with his own illness and chemotherapy treatments, took its toll and he never regained his former mental or physical health. But at age ninety he still sang for chapel at the Southwest Senior Care Center. He couldn't see to read the music or words anymore, but he remembered all the old hymns and sang whenever he was asked. He retained his happy acceptance of life and when we asked him how he was, his response was "Couldn't be better!"

Paul Downer Henry died on 2 March 1989.

Kay Henry 1987



## JOHN CECIL HOPE

***John Cecil Hope told Reverend Al Juterbock, "Going to General Assembly is one thing I hope to do before I die." He was elected the Elder Representative of the Santa Fe Presbytery to the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church U.S.A. held in Rochester, New York. On the trip to Rochester he contracted a cold and on the return trip he visited a brother in Wisconsin. He was hospitalized and died of pneumonia and heart failure.***



John Cecil Hope was born in Birmingham, Iowa, on 19 May 1898, the son of Harry and Minta Ragsdale Hope. He had three brothers and two sisters. He spent his early childhood around Holcomb, Kansas, and later moved to Garden City, where he spent most of his school days. In 1918 Cecil enlisted in the United States Navy and served for the duration of World War I. He was a member of the American Legion for fifty years.

After World War I he began his career with the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway, where he worked as an operator, dispatcher and night chief dispatcher for 43 years. He was stationed in Colorado and in Las Vegas, New Mexico. He retired in 1964. He was always willing to take time to help fellow employees, regardless of how busy he might

be.

**John Cecil Hope** Cecil married Mildred Bruce 15 July 1920. They had gone together all the way through high school. They were the parents of two daughters, Phyllis Jean Hope Wilson, and Florence Kathryn Hope Wilson. Both daughters live in Topeka. Cecil was a devoted father, enjoying his family and home to the fullest.

He was an active member of the Las Vegas Rotary Club, where he served a term as president and was secretary for several years. He enjoyed golf, played almost daily, and was a member of the Golf Association.

As a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas, Cecil Hope served in many capacities. He became a ruling elder on 1 July 1940 and remained until 1 January 1966. He served as Sunday school Superintendent in 1940 and on the Pastoral Search Committee in 1950. For many years he accepted the responsibility of seeing that the furnace was working. It was in poor condition and had to be replaced in 1944.

Cecil once relinquished the honor of being a Representative to the General Assembly in order that another member of the church could go. He

was finally able to attend the 1971 General Assembly in Rochester and was appointed to the National Ministerial Relations Committee. Returning home, he contracted pneumonia, and his daughter, Phyllis Jean, flew to be with him. He died on 7 June 1971. That same year, the carpeting and choir curtains in the sanctuary of the church were given by friends in his memory. Mildred B. Hope 1986

## MILDRED BRUCE HOPE

***The First Presbyterian Church was blessed with a large bequest of books upon the death of Smith A. Connell. This donation increased its small library to a collection probably not equaled by many churches of its size. The church owned an adjoining cottage and shed. Mildred Hope spent one summer in the shed cataloging the books. The shed and the cottage were later torn down to make room for an addition to the church, with room for the expanded library.***

Mildred Bruce was born in Wooster, Ohio, on 8 October 1897 the daughter of James H. Bruce and Nannie Mills. She was the youngest of seven children. The family moved near Holcomb, Kansas, in about 1907 then to a farm north of Garden City, where Mildred lived until 1917.

She was employed by the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway Company at Holcomb and several other stations as operator, telegraph operator and agent. During high school she went with Cecil Hope, and they were married

15 July 1920, when he was discharged from the Navy after serving for the duration of World War I. When Cecil was established with the railway, she quit her job.



They had two daughters, Phyllis Jean and Florence Kathryn. The Hopes lived in La Junta, Colorado and several times in Las Vegas, New Mexico, where they were active members of the First Presbyterian Church. In 1966 Mildred Hope was Sunday school Superintendent. She oversaw the Nursery and Primary Sunday school for a number of years and Vacation Church School for several summers. She remembers the excellent help she had from Ethel Prichard, Joyce Hilton and Nancy Davidson.

1941

Mildred

librarian. She went to work for the City of Las Vegas for eleven years in the Carnegie Public

Library. It was labor under difficulties as there were other pressures on her. However, she had considerable help from her husband. Her mother, who lived with them for twenty-five years, was hospitalized for part of the time. Phyllis Jean and Florence Kathryn were in college. Thereafter, Mildred worked for the library part-time until 1971. There is an engraved plate at the checkout desk in appreciation of the service of Mildred and Cecil to the library.

Mildred was also president of the Child Health Center of Las Vegas for several years. After Cecil's death in 1971 Mildred sold their home and

Mildred Bruce

moved to Garden City with Rev. Al Juterbock's assistance. Several summers after that, she lived in the manse while the Juterbocks were on vacation, a time she remembers with delight. In Garden City she volunteered several days a week in the office of the Garden City First Presbyterian Church. In 1978 she moved to the United Methodist Home in Topeka, to be near her family. She continued to volunteer her time by helping people in the home.

For five years, Mildred volunteered at the City Library and for four years at two City School Libraries. Mildred says, "It isn't how old you are, but how you are old." Her service was recognized in March 1985, when she was appointed Volunteer for the Month by the Shawnee Volunteer Association.

Her daughter, Phyllis Jean Hope Wilson, is a kindergarten teacher for the Topeka City Schools, and Florence Kathryn Hope Wilson is an employee of the Menninger Foundation.

Mildred Bruce Hope died in Topeka, Kansas, on 22 December 1995.

Mildred Bruce Hope 1986



## MARGARET ANNA LOUISE "MARGE" KLAUSER BUXTON

***The First Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas is a stronger church because of Marge Buxton and her family.***

Margaret Buxton passed away 19 April 2001 just one week shy of her 101<sup>st</sup> birthday, and therefore was the oldest member of the First Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas. She remained active in the church until declining health necessitated a move to Southwest Senior Care Nursing Home in 1997.



Margaret Anna Louise Klauser was born in Chicago, 28 April 1900. She wed Elmer Uhlrich "Buck" Buxton on 20 February 1937.

She worked for Illinois Bell all her life beginning as a switchboard operator at age 16. After she and her husband retired, they moved to Las Vegas in 1957.

She transferred membership to the First Presbyterian Church from Christ Presbyterian Church in Chicago. When Buck passed away on 16 June 1966 Marge gave the church a silver chalice and plate and a crystal cruet in memory of her husband. These items are used regularly in the communion services.

Buck was a very active member of the local Lions Club, as well as the Evanston Illinois Lions Club. He was in the moving and storage business in Evanston, Illinois, until his retirement. He became a member of First Presbyterian Church by reaffirmation of faith. He was also a Mason.

### **Margaret "Marge" Buxton**

Marge was very active in the Las Vegas Woman's Club and was a volunteer in the Hospital Auxiliary for more than 20 years. She was also a member of the Las Vegas Golf Association and the Garden Club. She loved playing bridge and belonged to several clubs and was always happy to teach beginners how to play bridge.

Joyce Litherland 2001



## ELIZABETH JOSEPHINE AUGUSTA KLAUSER HILTON

***Betty Hilton was a devoted wife, mother, and church member, as well as an active member of many civic organizations. A Memorial Fund for disabled children was established in her name.***

Elizabeth "Betty" Klauser was born 29 September 1903, in Chicago, the daughter of August Xavier Klauser and Hedwig "Hattie" Schwenke Klauser. She had an older sister, Margaret Klauser Buxton, and a younger brother, Walter Xavier Klauser. After graduation from high school she went to work for the John R. Thompson restaurant chain. She was private secretary for John R. Thompson Jr. until her marriage to Ivan Jay Hilton 25 December 1926. The Hiltons ran a wholesale gift shop in the Merchandise Mart with Ivan's brother, Charles Newton "Charlie" Hilton serving as traveling salesman.



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Jay Hilton, Jr. Charlie gave him the nickname, "Buddy," which he was called until his death 9 September 1929, from a malignant sarcoma tumor. Marilyn Lois was born 14 April 1930 but lived only six hours. Meanwhile Ivan had contracted tuberculosis and the family had moved to a ranch they had purchased near Rociada, New Mexico. It took a great deal of courage for a woman who had always lived in steam-heated Chicago apartments to move to a primitive trappers' cabin at 8000 feet elevation in the mountains of New Mexico.

The next four years were spent building numerous log cabins on their property and opening the Jay-C-Bar Ranch as a western dude ranch in June 1934, just one month after the birth of Joyce Elaine on 8 May. The Hiltons ran a successful guest ranch, and raised cattle, a dairy herd, pigs, chickens, and an extensive garden until it became difficult to get help during World War II. Charlie and Ivan's mother, Rosa Katie, better known as "Grandma" Hilton, also moved to New Mexico. Betty's mother, Hattie, came during the summer months. The other members of the family assisted with the guest ranch.

Ivan also owned Hilton Motors, a Buick-Oldsmobile-GMC dealership purchased in 1936 and divided his time between the two businesses. When Joyce reached school age in 1940, the family moved into the town of Las Vegas, spending just summer and weekends at the ranch.

Betty was an active member of the First Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas, with King's Daughters being her special love. She served as

Elizabeth "Betty"

treasurer of the organization for many years and was also president for one term. She assisted with the youth group during the years Joyce was active in junior and senior high fellowship, and again when Joyce herself served as sponsor for the youth fellowship after she had graduated from Texas Western College and done graduate work at the University of California.

Betty was an active member of the Las Vegas Woman's Club, serving as treasurer for many terms and as president for one year. Through the Woman's Club she developed a great interest in the special education classes in the Las Vegas Public Schools and worked to obtain funds and materials for many special projects and outings for these children. Upon her death a memorial fund was established in her name for disabled children. She was also very active in Girl Scouting, serving as a leader for eight years. She was a volunteer in the hospital auxiliary for many years, with her particular project being the hospital gift cart, which preceded the gift shop. She herself pushed the cart around to all the hospital rooms on many days, sharing cheer and a visit, as well as the little gifts and necessities for sale (stocked by her), and she organized other volunteers to do the job on days she could not. She was also a member of the Las Vegas Town and Country Garden Club and the Las Vegas Women's Golf Association.

Betty was sorely missed after her death to cancer 18 December 1969. She was survived by her husband, Ivan, her sister, "Marge", her daughter, Joyce. Joyce married Ivan Ray Litherland on 27 April 1957, and they are the parents of three children, John Jay, Sharon Ludell, and Kenneth Ray and now have seven grandchildren.

Joyce Litherland 1990

## FREDERICK CARL RAWLINS

***Frederick Carl Rawlins was generous with his time and willingly accepted responsibility in the church whenever he was asked.***

Frederick Carl Rawlins was born on 19 February 1904 to George W. and Martha Josephine Rawlins in Belleview, Missouri. He was the youngest of George W. Rawlins's five children including a half-sister, Ollie, a half-brother, George, and two brothers Edgar and Edmond. Fred's mother died when he was four years old and his eight-year-old brother, Edmond, took him to school with him to care for him. The family moved from Missouri to Oklahoma by wagon, then to southwest Iowa where his father remarried. Fred Rawlins graduated from Thurman High School in 1922 and enrolled at nearby Tabor College in Tabor, Iowa.



he met  
was assigned the seat next to his in chapel. They were married a year later, she at sixteen and he at nineteen.

Between their sophomore and junior years in college, they moved to Fairfield, Iowa, and enrolled in Parsons College, where they graduated in 1926. Among their professors at Parsons was Dr. B. D. Roberts, who subsequently moved to Las Vegas, New Mexico, and taught at Highlands University. They were reunited briefly in 1945, when their oldest son Fred W. "Billy" and the Roberts' daughter Ruth Ann met at a Presbytery convention of Westminster

Fellowship.

**Frederick Carl** At the time of his graduation, Fred Rawlins observed, "I didn't know you could do anything to make a living but farm and teach school." His life until that time had convinced him he did not want to farm, and in 1927 he and his wife moved to Pleasantville, Iowa, near Des Moines, where he began an eighteen-year career as a schoolteacher. In 1929 they drove in a Model T Ford with their eighteen-month-old son, Billy, to Wyoming.

There were few paved highways at the time and Fred recalled stopping every forty miles to clean the spark plugs on the Model T. At one point, when Elk Mountain, Wyoming, loomed in the distance, he said he was ready to turn around and head back to Iowa. A snow slide, still visible in August, appeared to be a road over the mountain, and he said, "I knew the old car just wouldn't make it."

Fred taught mathematics in Rawlins Junior High School, and later in Rawlins High School. The town of Rawlins was at the edge of Wyoming's

Red Desert, just east of the Continental Divide. It had a population of 6,000 with no paved streets until 1937. It is a matter of conjecture whether John A. Rawlins, a Civil War general after whom the town was named, was any kin to Fred Rawlins.

Fred resigned from the school system in 1943 to become secretary-treasurer of the Rawlins Electric Company. The family moved in 1944 to Santa Fe where he became office manager for the New Mexico Power Company, which subsequently became a part of the Public Service Company of New Mexico.

The Rawlins' second son, Paul, was born in 1947, the year they moved to Albuquerque and subsequently to Las Vegas. Fred and Rose were active in the First Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas as well as Robertson High School affairs. Fred was secretary-treasurer of the Presbyterian Men's Club, which was organized in 1954. He became a ruling elder of the First Presbyterian Church on 12 January 1955. He served as president of the Rotary Club of Las Vegas in 1957-1958 and was a Mason.

The couple celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary in 1974, after moving to North Port, Florida to retire. They lived in North Port until 1982. Then because of Fred's illness the couple moved to Woodbridge, Virginia, to live with their son, Paul, and daughter-in-law, the former Peggy Boone.

Fred Rawlins died on 8 July 1982.

Frederick W. Rawlins 1986

## ROSE IONE NICHOLISEN RAWLINS

***Rose Rawlins is remembered fondly for her years of service as treasurer of the First Presbyterian Church.***

Rose Ione Nicholisen was born in Rodney, Iowa, on 10 April 1907 to Nels and Mary Nicholisen. She was the youngest of four children. Her brothers were Clarence Christian, Hubert and Marion. Hubert became her guardian after her parents died while she was a teen-ager. She graduated from high school at fifteen. In 1922, she enrolled in the now-defunct Tabor College in Tabor, Iowa. She met Fred C. Rawlins when assigned the seat next to his in chapel. They were married a year later, she at sixteen and he at nineteen.



their moved to Fairfield, Iowa, and enrolled in Parsons College, where they graduated in 1926. The family lived several years in Iowa where their first son, Billy, was born, and Fred began an eighteen-year career as a schoolteacher.

They next moved to Wyoming where Fred taught mathematics at Rawlins Junior High School and later in Rawlins High School. It was a near-pioneering experience. The town of Rawlins was settled by ranchers and merchants just one

generation older than the young family from the Midwest. Buffeted by generation older than the young family from the Midwest. Buffeted by Rose Nicholisen  
— their own sand, the town had no paved streets for the first eight years they lived there. In Rawlins, Rose was a mother, a substitute teacher, and active in the American Association of University Women.

During World War II she worked as a clerk in the Rawlins Post Office. Her husband resigned from the school system in 1943 to become secretary-treasurer of the Rawlins Electric Company. In 1944 they moved to Santa Fe, where he became office manager for the New Mexico Power Company, later a part of the Public Service Company of New Mexico.

The Rawlins' second son, Paul, was born in 1947. Soon thereafter they moved to Las Vegas, where they were active in the First Presbyterian Church. Rose served the church many years as treasurer. She was also an energetic member of the Rotary-Ann and kept busy in Robertson High School activities. She attended Highlands University to obtain her teaching certificate.

The couple celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary in 1974, after moving to North Port, Florida, near the Gulf Coast. They lived in North Port until 1982, when they were forced by Fred's illness to move to Woodbridge,

Virginia, to live with son, Paul, and daughter-in-law, the former Peggy Boone.

Fred died in 1982, and Rose moved in 1984 to Nashville, Tennessee where she lived with her elder son, Bill, and his wife Suzanne, before her death on 16 September 1986.

Frederick W. Rawlins 1986

## **JOHN W. AND EDITH H. RACKLEY**

John and Edith Rackley loved their mountain ranch and church. Throughout their lives they offered comfort and support to many individuals and causes.

John W. Rackley was born in a small ranching community near Van Horn, Texas, 4 November 1904 to Augusta Hardgrave and Jefferson Davis Rackley. In 1905 the family moved to Carlsbad, New Mexico, where John enjoyed a happy childhood swimming in the lake and canals and exploring the many caves in the nearby hills. John's sister and brothers, Mildred, Max, and Frank, were born in Carlsbad. The family was active in the community and church life. In this framework John experienced his first spiritual encounter from which he grew and benefited throughout his life.



John graduated from the Las Vegas High School and attended New Mexico Normal University. His studies included woodworking, which he practiced the rest of his life. John earned his college expenses by working for his father in the family coal business and by teaching physical education at the YMCA.

John went to work with his uncle in ranching and farming near Abilene, Texas. Later his uncle purchased the Pendaries Ranch at Rociada, New Mexico, from the Baca family, and John managed this until his uncle's death. John and his brother, Max, bought a ranch in the Sapello Canyon. Later, Max sold his interest.

John met Edith Clement Hardy in 1939. Edith with her son Joseph Allen Hardy then 11 years old, had moved to Las Vegas in 1936. Edith was born in Palacios, Texas, on 4 January 1903. She attended John Sealy Hospital Nursing School in Galveston and took her first nursing position in Carlsbad, New Mexico in 1925. At the time that John and Edith met, she was employed by the Public Health Service of San Miguel County, specializing in prenatal care. Continuing her public health education later on, Edith took an MA from University of Michigan in Ann Arbor in 1958,

**John W. Rackley**

working and teaching for a number of years as the nurse at New Mexico Highlands University.

John and Edith married on 5 April 1940 in Carlsbad and took up residence on the ranch in Sapello. They and their three children, Joseph, Caroline and Davis were active in the First Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas, following in the family tradition begun by Jefferson Davis and Augusta Rackley, John's father and mother. John served on the church nominating committee several years. He was an elder and trustee from 1972 through 1975. As trustee he served as secretary one year and chairman another year. About that time the church needed a new roof and John was among several men willing to do the work. Edith served as treasurer of the United Presbyterian Women Association for a number of years and was an elder for three years. They were known for offering comfort and support to people and causes in our area.

John remodeled the old ranch house into a modern, comfortable home and in making the furnishings, produced many fine examples of craftsmanship in wood. He build barns for other ranches up and down the Sapello Canyon using products of logging and the sawmill which he operated on his own place. John was intense in whatever he was doing; he was flexible, versatile and strove for excellence in a wide variety of skills. Among other things he was widely acclaimed as a superb gardener.

S. Omar Barker, noted poet, author and John's long time neighbor, once remarked that John was the most ingenious person he had ever known. To many John was special, unique, one who seldom talked but communicated much and with a rare sense of humor.

In 1979 John and Edith moved to Carlsbad where they continued to show compassion, always finding ways to help others. But John was at the ranch he loved in August of 1986, doing what made him happy, when he heard to call to "come home." He left us on the 13<sup>th</sup> of that month.

Edith lived in Carlsbad after John's death, eventually joining the Landson Home in Carlsbad where she spent a few pleasant years before going to join God's family in 1998.

John and Edith are buried on a hill overlooking their old home in the Sapello Canyon.

Caroline Rackley 1986

Annual Report First Presbyterian Church

Dale B. Gerdeman 2002

## CARTER BERT FORBES

***Carter Forbes led the adult Sunday school class for many years. An adventurous spirit, he traveled through Europe as a youth by bike and motorbike. Although written in the first person, this humorous biography is written by Carter's son, Bert.***

I was born on 29 June 1905. I don't remember a thing about it and if I had my mother would have been the most embarrassed woman in twenty-seven counties. She said it was a very hot June day at Chillicothe, Texas. In 1910



Halley's Comet made a scheduled visit to our vicinity. My folks didn't think a five-year-old would be interested in comets and didn't bother to wake me to see it, but I was up and I did see it one night. It has always been my ambition to see Halley's Comet twice--a nice ambition, as it does not involve a lot of work in between times.

mother  
would find would be a road map. I did grow a great desire to see the world, all of it, twice. Even as a child there was travel in my life.

once

had shoes  
was the little boy from the country, and when school was out, I had to hurry home. It was just two miles. Today in a car and on paved farm-to-market road it seems short. To a small boy, it seemed rather long. As an adult in Las Vegas, I always envied my son

having only to walk across the street.

**Carter B. Forbes** My grandfathers were both Baptists and my grandmothers were Presbyterians. No one will be surprised that both my parents were Presbyterians. I grew up in the First Presbyterian Church at Chillicothe, Texas, and went to Sunday school for seven years without missing. The Presbyterian building was the first church erected in Chillicothe, likely in the 1890s. When the church disbanded many years later, I erected a tombstone in the Chillicothe cemetery with its name.

Sometime in my early teens two flavors of First Presbyterian Churches united. In general people favored such uniting, as they seemed to envision a country with only one kind of church. On one Sunday there was a uniting service after which the official membership of the new united church was established by a roll call. In those days just about everyone went to church. Most social life centered around the church as well as the news and politics.



I was sixteen when my parents adopted twins: Eddie and Bert Forbes. About the third year of high school, I got sick. Nothing you could single out, just no pep. The doctor cut my studies down to about half and ordered me to bed earlier. This made me about five years getting through high school. Farm fieldwork was always too much for me. I could work myself very hard and not pick a hundred pounds (of cotton) a day. Other kids my size would pick twice that much.

I don't know why I went to college--maybe mother told me to, or maybe dad realized that if I made a living, it would have to be with my head. I took off by train for the summer school at West Texas State Teachers College at Canyon. They had some high school work there, and I started taking courses and taking college entrance examinations. Those days in Canyon were 1923-24, and the next fall I left for Austin. The engineering school at the University of Texas was in my future.

In the fall of 1927, while watching a big parade for the football game, I coughed and spit a mouthful of blood. After much thumping, listening and x-rays, it was decided by six doctors that I had tuberculosis. One thing about TB is that it gives you plenty of time to think about just about everything. The problem of getting through the university had sure vanished. In the twenties people were a little afraid of tuberculosis. There was no cure for TB except rest and climate and it had been decided that climate had little to do with it. Christmas in a sanitarium is tough.

The doctors said I was getting well, and every day became Thanksgiving to me and still is. People who do not use their lives bother me. I'm sure I live on borrowed time and you can't pay too much interest on borrowed time. In the spring I went to my doctor for my usual checkup. All the usual routine, but more questions than usual. After a while, he took my medical record card and wrote across the bottom, "This man is well and doesn't know it." I framed the little card, and it is still around. It was my diploma from the University of Tuberculosis. It isn't very well-known because it does not have a football team, but you can learn a great deal there.

In 1931 I was 26, but I was not equal to the job of replacing my father when he died. I sold his meat market. Mother didn't want to use the car; there were no jobs, so Tom Britt and I decided to see some of the world. New Orleans, Alabama, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, Colorado. We finally ended up in Dallas. Later I went to Chelan, Washington, to work in the construction of the Howe Sound Mine. It shows how ecumenical I am, because today those buildings about 50 miles above Lake Chelan are the site of a Lutheran retreat camp.

After my Chelan stay, I took Mother and the twins to Boulder, Colorado, and left them, then to Chillicothe, to Fort Worth, to Galveston and finally down to Pier 27 to board the German well-deck freighter Swanheim. She was loaded with cotton and bound for Bremen, Germany. I got off the

freighter in Bremen and bought a bicycle for \$21 and headed up through Germany to Denmark over into Sweden. I swapped the bicycle for a motorbike. Then I went to Norway, back into Denmark, and ferried across to Warnemunde, Germany. To Berlin, Munich, over Brenner Pass to Venice, Florence and as far down as Rome I journeyed. North to Lucerne, Switzerland and by train, well it was all by train, to Paris. In Antwerp, my motorbike and I got passage home on the Likes Brothers freighter, the Scottsburg. There was no doubt in my mind there was going to be another European war. People laughed at the idea, but a few remembered.

Since I had had TB, I could get training in photography and get a little pay while learning. In Dallas a Sunday school teacher in the big Methodist church downtown had a very good reputation, so I went there. The first Sunday as I walked in and sat down, there was a young lady with beautiful red hair, and no freckles, wearing a frilly black dress, reading from the Bible. Each Sunday I would gather up a Chevrolet full of young ladies and deliver them to their home. One Sunday, I got to the end of the delivery route and discovered there was one (the redheaded one) left over, so I married her on 1 August 1939. If Lora Edna had not been teaching, we would have been considerably hungrier.

World War II was in full swing. People wouldn't hire me because they thought I would be drafted. Finally, there came an offer of a government teaching job in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. I should have waited for a job closer to home, but I was a little desperate. Entry on duty was 15 August 1942. My wife came to Sioux Falls for Christmas and for the summer. I went home with her to Fort Worth. The Civil Aeronautics Administration had some jobs that looked promising. I took some courses to prepare for my career in Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) maintenance. When my son Bert was three days old, I caught the train to Amarillo, to Albuquerque and then on the other main line of the Santa Fe to Las Vegas. I got off there at fifteen minutes till midnight on my birthday 29 June 1944. Who could foresee that I would stay twenty-seven years? I retired from government work in Las Vegas.

I went to the First Presbyterian Church and met some regular town people. Mrs. Shillinglaw knew of a house going vacant and got it for me. From then on my family was active in that church.

From a one-man traveling sector of FAA regional maintenance, it developed into a supervisory job with eight and a half people on my crews. I was active in Rotary in Las Vegas for years and got a kick out of the programs. One time I did a program on UFOs which sort of shook their thinking.

In the Las Vegas years I made use of a rule that I like better than the Golden Rule, which very briefly stated, is "Leave it better than you found it." As you go through life, try to leave situations and people better than you find them. I tried to do that always.

We left Las Vegas when I retired and bought a trailer in McAllen, Texas. The winters were nice there, and we made a lot of friends who came to stay in McAllen for the winters, as we did. Summers were hot, so my itchy feet took us elsewhere. When I bought the travel trailer, I aimed to spend 1000 nights in it. The 1000th night was spent in Mountain View, California, where we parked near Bert and Candee for the summer.

Later on when I was 72, we uprooted ourselves from McAllen because I knew I had arteriosclerosis and I wanted Lora Edna to be near Bert & Candee when I was gone. We bought a trailer in Mountain View and moved there in February 1978. I didn't have long there. I died on 10 May 1978 of complications from appendicitis, but I sure did enjoy getting to know my grandson, Bryn, for seven months before I left the planet.

Well this tale is done. Now I have a small job for you, dear reader. If and when Halley's Comet comes back, will you go out and take a good look just for me? If the tale doesn't seem quite right, don't be surprised; by then I might be in the Comet Department.

Bert Forbes 1987

## LORA EDNA FORBES

***Lora Edna and Carter helped form a lively group of young married couples in the First Presbyterian Church who called themselves the "Saints and Sinners." Written in the first person, this "autobiography" of Lora Edna is by her son Bert.***

I was born 4 December 1909 in Fort Worth, Texas, which was then a substantial city compared to Dallas. I was the fourth child. Our family would not seem as different in today's world of his/hers and our families, but in 1910, having a half-brother and half-sister seemed quite unusual. My mother had remarried to Everett Turner (my father) after her first husband died.



the older sister Marietta took good care of me, but it was hard to get permission to do anything by myself. My father was a wheelwright and made windmills and buggy/automobile wheels. We survived fairly well in that we never went hungry, but money was never in great supply.

was later in life will have trouble believing this. I seemed to attract accidents ranging from pulling a coffeepot off a table onto myself to being on a train that derailed. It wasn't until college that I outgrew these problems.

My older siblings were all out working by the time I graduated from high school as the valedictorian of my class. Being a woman and being smart was a combination that offered only two choices: get married or go to college to become a teacher. Thanks to the scrimping and saving of Marietta I was able to go to Texas Woman's College. I had a scholarship for my freshman year and worked in the administration office to cover tuition after that.

By the time I graduated from TWC (now known as Texas Wesleyan University) in 1931, the Depression had begun and there was no work to be found. Being a good student trapped at home with little to do, I learned how to cook and sew by reading cookbooks and pattern books. Up until that time my sister claimed I didn't even know how to boil water. I eventually became a very good cook and seamstress. Both of these hobbies gave my family and me much pleasure over the years.

In 1934 I got a job substitute teaching in the Fort Worth school system. That was the year our house burned, and my father died. The next

**Lora Edna Forbes**

always

year I was hired to teach second grade full time, which helped fill the financial hole left by my father's death.

By this time, I was worried that I was going to be an old maid, but in 1937 I met a man named Carter Forbes. I was teaching Sunday school at the Methodist church and a mutual friend introduced us. She told me later that Carter had wanted to meet "a red head" and I was the only suitable one she knew. It must have been one of those things that we so often attribute to "coincidence" but really spring from the universal interconnectedness of all human beings.

He had just returned from touring Europe on a motorbike (so typical of Carter to do something ahead of his time) and courted me on it. My son Bert followed in his father's footsteps thirty years later and courted his wife Candee on a motor scooter. Carter had such an unusual way of looking at the world and such a curiosity about everything that I was entranced. We were married on 1 August 1939 in the Methodist Church in Fort Worth. In typical fashion, Carter found a horseshoe on the way to the church and carried it in his pocket during the ceremony. He always was lucky.

Unlike Carter, I had never traveled outside of Texas. He and his itchy feet took it upon themselves to rectify that situation. We took a trip to Colorado in the 1936 Chevrolet he had purchased. I cannot describe the emotions I felt when I first laid eyes on the Rockies. For a child from the plains of Texas, this was like God had opened the gates and let me gaze on the kingdom of heaven. It left a permanent impression on me. The sailors on Columbus' ship who thought the world was flat couldn't have been more surprised than I was.

Over the years I was to see all 50 states and parts of Europe, Canada and Mexico with my husband/travel guide. His idea of a vacation was to get in the car and drive. Sometimes I would have preferred to stay in one place for a while, but life was never dull with Carter.

We survived economically through my teaching job and whatever Carter could earn from his photography studio. His talent at photography endured long after he gave up the studio. I gave him an Argus C-3 in 1950, which produced thousands of travel slides over the years. Like many couples during the war, we were separated for a time while I taught school in Fort Worth and he taught electronics for the Army in South Dakota.

I had always wanted children, and on 25 June 1944 our son Bert Everett Forbes was born. Carter had gotten a job with the Civil Aeronautics Administration and was waiting for the birth before leaving for Las Vegas, New Mexico. Three months later Bert and I moved to Las Vegas to join Carter. I had hoped to have another child, a girl if possible, but that was not to be. We tried to adopt a child, but the authorities thought we were too old (I was 34 when Bert was born).

Our good friends Charlotte and Ray Farmer adopted a girl, Jan, in 1954. I loved her like my own and made many clothes for her. The Farmers,

the Prichards and the Forbes were constant companions during the Vegas years. We helped form the Presbyterian adult group known as "Saints and Sinners." Carter had a big hand in choosing the name for the group. Many potlucks were shared in Gallinas Canyon and hours of canasta were played in our living rooms. Our children loved being together as much as we did.

A good deal of our lives was centered around the First Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas. Carter taught an adult Sunday school class and I taught in the children's department. I never did go back to teaching in the public schools, but volunteered for many things, including being a nurse's aide at the Las Vegas Hospital.

Those years moved quickly, and soon Bert was off to MIT in Boston for college, and in 1968 Carter retired from the FAA after 24 years in Las Vegas. We bought an Airstream trailer and nominally retired to McAllen, Texas, or as retired as you can be when married to a confirmed traveler like Carter. Bert married Candee and settled in California. We traveled there every summer and wore ruts in the roads between Texas and California.

I had hoped to have grandchildren soon, but Bert and Candee had lots to do before getting around to kids. Bert seemed to have inherited his dad's wanderlust. They moved to Switzerland in 1972 and I finally got to Europe as a result. For Carter it was a dream come true to go back and revisit the places he had seen in the 1930s. While there he attended a Rotary International convention.

1977 brought our first grandson--Bryn Bert Forbes. We moved to Mountain View, California, to be nearby, but life was not to be that way for long. Carter died of complications of appendicitis on 10 May 1978. I'm glad he had the short time with Bryn. Life was lonely after he died, but I kept busy sewing for Bryn. He was allergic to cow's milk, so I made an angel food cake with special icing for his first birthday. I love him a lot.

At Thanksgiving that year it was my turn to die, and I left them to their lives. I died of a heart attack from a blood clot that lodged in my heart. I was sewing a Christmas stocking for Bryn when the attack came. Bert came and found me that way. Bryn still uses that stocking, but I never got to meet their second child Skye. She was born in 1981--how I would have loved to make clothes for her: pink frilly things are her favorites! I love her, too.

Although Carter died before me, he wrote my epitaph: "She loved the little children and animals." We're buried side by side in the cemetery in his hometown of Chillicothe, Texas.

I've only been back to earth once--to visit Bert in a dream. I came to tell him that life doesn't end with death and that the cosmic love that exists in the soul is universal and all pervading. Love is what my life was about, and it still goes on.

Bert Forbes 1987



# 4

## 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY PRESBYTERIAN EDUCATORS

Las Vegas is blessed with three institutions of higher learning: New Mexico Highlands University, Luna Community College, and Armand Hammer United World College of the American West. The First Presbyterian Church is fortunate to have a number of teachers who either teach or have taught at one of these educational institutions. There are also other teachers with a variety of backgrounds. Those of us in the congregation who have benefitted from their talents appreciate their dedication and hard work.

New Mexico Highlands University has a student body of about 2,500 in Las Vegas. NMHU also has External Academic Programs in learning centers in about eight neighboring communities with about 1,000 students. The NMHU electronic communication technology Distance Education serves about 20 neighboring communities.

Formerly named New Mexico Normal University, New Mexico Highlands University opened in 1898. In the early days it had more students in the summer time in the winter Sessions. Teachers desirous of continuing their education chose to come to Las Vegas for their educational advancement because of the comfortable summer weather.

Luna Community College (formerly LVTI) has an enrollment of about 1,600. It enjoys an outstanding reputation for its caliber of facilities, teaching methods, curricula and dedication to excellence. It is the only vocational technical school in northeastern New Mexico. The mission of the school is to prepare its students for productive employment through a broad range of vocational and technical education programs. The administration strives to anticipate changes in the job market and effectively train and retrain students to upgrade their skills and increase their employability. The school offers a two-year associate in applied science degrees in over 13 occupational fields. It also offers one-year and two-year certificate programs in 20 occupational fields. Luna has satellites in Springer and Santa Rosa.

Armand Hammer United World College of the American West has an enrollment of about 200 international students. It is one of nine United World Colleges, and the only one in the United States. In 1982, the land, hotel and other improvements was purchased by philanthropist Armand Hammer for the World College. The students represent more than 70 nations. The aim of the college is to bring together young people, ages 16 to 19, from a range of nations, races and social backgrounds to study



together in a challenging two-year program and perform wilderness and community services so that they may learn from this interaction how to respect, cooperate with, and live in harmony with people who are different from themselves.

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## LOUELLA HAYS

***For forty years Louella Hays taught Sunday school in the First Presbyterian Church. Many of her former students described their education under her tutelage as one of the most important factors in their Christian upbringing.***

Louella Hays was born on 14 October 1889 near Ottawa, Kansas. She was one of three girls, the children of Samuel S. Hays and his wife, Mary Kelsey Hays. The father died when the girls were small, and their mother ran the farm and raised and educated the children.



Miss Hays attended a little rural school. She remembered that books from the city library were a constant source of pleasure. Miss Hays attended high school in Ottawa and continued her studies in Greeley, Colorado, where she earned her Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees in education.

She studied further at the University of Southern California and the University of California at Los Angeles.

Louella Hays taught in the public schools in Silver City, New Mexico. There she met Walter McFarland. Later he became superintendent of schools in Las Vegas and he encouraged her to move to Las Vegas. Miss Hays arrived in Las Vegas in the fall of 1918, when housing was difficult to find. There were two elementary schools, Douglas and Castle. Miss Hays taught at the Douglas School.

### **Louella Hays**

During her career she was a reading specialist in the Normal Training School and an instructor at Highlands University. She later returned as principal of Douglas School until she retired in 1952. After her retirement, she went back to the classroom as a teacher in the Jack and Jill Kindergarten, where she continued to teach until 1974. Her hobbies were growing flowers and baking.

One of her sisters, Mabel G. Hays, lived in Las Vegas with her for a time. They were members of the First Presbyterian Church. She was an active leader in the church and was a member of the board of elders, a member of Presbytery and Synod, and president of the United Presbyterian Women. Her former students often spoke of her lasting influence on their lives. There was a short period during which some in the congregation felt spiritual leadership was not being provided in the First Presbyterian Church. Some members of the congregation went to other churches, but

Louella Hays made the comment that no one was going to drive her out of "her church."

On 30 December 1975 The Las Vegas Rotary Club selected Louella Hays for the Rotary Outstanding Citizen Award. An article in the *Las Vegas Daily Optic* about her being so honored included several sentences as follows:

*A member of the First Presbyterian Church, Miss Hays taught Sunday school for 40 years. She has been an active leader in the church, having been on the Board of Elders. A member of the area boards—both Presbytery and Synod, and president of the local United Presbyterian Women. She was an active member of the church's Bible study group.*

*Miss Hays was small in stature. When driving her car, she found it necessary to look through the steering wheel, as she was not tall enough to see over it. New people in town were often seen to do a double-take, as it appeared the car was moving without a driver.*

*She was an outstanding teacher with the ability to stimulate and encourage young people. She was happy, kind, well-organized, systematic, dedicated, enthusiastic, talented, warm and hard-working. To describe how an exceptional artist, athlete or teacher differs from those who are good is difficult. Some who had her as a teacher said simply that they treasure their memories of her. Her students did not want to miss any of her classes.*

One of her former students, Dorothy King Walters wrote:

*[As] I look back [I] realize how much influence Miss Hays had on me. She taught Sunday school when I was about in the fifth and sixth grades. Her classes were stimulating and interesting—I am sure the best ever taught there. Only when I tried to teach myself did I appreciate how much thought and time she put into those lessons.*

Harold Thatcher wrote a short description of her. He said:

*Miss Hays had an aura of simplistic providence in her talent as an educator. She made lasting impressions on the minds of her students. She was treasured by her students as a role model of what a teacher should be.*

The City of Las Vegas recognized her devotion and community service by the dedication of the Louella Hays Children's Room at the Carnegie Public Library in her memory.

Louella Hays died 16 October 1978 and was buried in Ottawa, Kansas.

Dale B. Gerdeman 1986

## BYRON DAVID ROBERTS and LAURA P. ROBERTS

***Byron D. Roberts was a Phi Beta Kappa. He was the type of person who could be counted on to master any situation or emergency. Laura Pike Roberts taught high school mathematics and science in northern Indiana both before and after her marriage. Their children Kenneth Roberts and Ruth Ann Roberts Jones have written the details of their parents' lives.***

Byron D. Roberts was born 16 June 1893 in Chicago, Illinois, the son of David Roberts and Mary Ann Seidner Roberts. When he was six years old the family moved to a farm near Knox, Indiana. He attended a country



school, rowing a boat across the lake on which their farm was situated to the grade school. He attended high school in Knox. Because of the distance involved he lived in Knox with the Talbot family. He became a lifelong friend of John Talbot who was in his high school class.

graduation

school at Indiana State Normal. He began his teaching career the following autumn teaching in an elementary school in rural Starke County, Indiana. In the following

years he taught in elementary and secondary schools in Indiana. It was

**Byron D. Roberts**

while he was teaching in Lowell that he met Laura Pike. They were married on 8 September 1917. The following year they both taught in San Pierre.

During World War I he served as a second lieutenant in the United States Army from 1918 to 1919. He was stationed at Camp Grant in Rockford, Illinois, where for a while he was in charge of a company of black soldiers in the still segregated Army. Following his discharge, he and Laura attended the University of Indiana for one year.

He received his B.A. degree in mathematics in 1920. He then accepted a teaching position in the mathematics department of Parsons College, a Presbyterian college in Fairfield, Iowa. He taught there from 1920 to 1932 serving as acting dean for three years. He continued teaching during the school year and attending the University in the summers. He received his M.A. in mathematics in 1922 from the University of Indiana and his Ph.D. in mathematics from the State University of Iowa in 1931.

From the time he first started teaching in 1911 B.D. had the determination, vision and dedication to obtain a Ph.D. He took classes in the summers for twenty-two or so years at Iowa University. He was a member

of Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Kappa Phi, and Sigma Xi, a science honorary society. He came to Las Vegas in 1932 to teach mathematics at New Mexico Normal University (now Highlands University). He taught in the mathematics department until his retirement in 1957. He served as acting dean from 1944 to 1945 and as dean from 1947 to 1952. He was acting president during the summers of 1938 and 1951.

Prior to World War II B.D. prepared himself to better understand the problems of flying by taking lessons from Las Vegas' flying instructor Lloyd Bible. He was called upon to preside over the Government sponsored wartime program for pilots, navigators, etc.

Roberts directed the World War II ration program for Las Vegas. He operated a printing shop near the First Presbyterian Church printing minor jobs basically to qualify himself for social security. New Mexico Normal University did not participate in Social Security at that time.

During World War II Roberts remained at Highlands teaching celestial navigation and other courses to V12 students who were preparing themselves for naval duty and the possibility of earning a commission. He also continued his other teaching duties at the college.

After the war, with his guidance, the University established a new academic course--a certificate program for airplane mechanics and auto mechanics. These students were qualified to go back home and make a better living for themselves and their families.

His son, Kenneth Roberts, hangs his suits on a hand-made maple bedroom stand given to his father by a Tucumcari student in gratitude for having his mind opened to the wonders of straight thinking. B.D. participated with the Koshares, treading the boards at Adele Ilfeld Auditorium, playing volley ball, playing bridge, making a few bucks in Las Vegas real estate (which was hard to do in those days) and helping the campus expand through some of his property to the north of the stadium area.

B.D. was a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas. He was superintendent of the Sunday school in 1935 and 1938 and was a trustee for many years. He was elected to be a ruling elder and served from July 1935 until January 1952 and was chairman of the every-member canvas. He taught the Sunday school for the senior class in 1947 and was a member of the choir and participated in the annual Candlelight Service that was held at Christmas time as well as in the Sunday morning service. He served on the pulpit supply committee in 1950 and 1951.

In the book, *Preparing the Way*, J. A. Schufle writes:

*Our church celebrated its Diamond Jubilee in 1946 under Rev. Duggan. Special Historical services were held throughout the year. Plans were made to repair and expand the church facilities. Mr. Hugo Zehner of Santa Fe was employed as the*

*architect for the rebuilding program. The cost of the rebuilding was paid by funds raised from the membership in a special building fund campaign, over \$10,000 being pledged in two months from the conception of the plans. Mr. John Edwin and Mr. Ora Ambrose were spark plugs of the building committee in getting the plans going, Mr. Ambrose serving as the first chairman of the committee. He was succeeded in 1947 by Professor B. D. Roberts. (Schufle 1970, 75)*

B. D. was a member of Rotary Club of Las Vegas for many years and was president of the club in 1943 and in 1954. A *Rotary flyer* proposing his name as candidate for District Governor reads:

*B. D. who holds a B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees in Mathematics, is a college professor.*

*He has had administrative experience as high school principal and public school superintendent and, at college level, as business manager, public relations officer, dean, and president.*

*A veteran officer of World War I, he is now 59 years of age. He is in excellent health and has the time and energy to devote to the governorship.*

*A member of our club for 19 years, he now has a perfect attendance record of nearly seven years. He is past president of the club and has been club secretary-treasurer since 1946. He has had the benefit of attending two international conventions and has a good grounding in the fundamentals of the club organization and functioning. He is an enthusiastic proponent of Rotary principles on all occasions.*

*We feel that he has an unusual combination of professional and business abilities with sound Rotary philosophy that makes him an outstanding candidate.*

*B. D. has been active in community and civic affairs through the years in such work as:*

*Chamber of Commerce member and director.*

*Boy Scout Council member and president.*

*First Presbyterian Church member, Elder, trustee.*

*Masonic Lodge.*

*American Legion.*

*Leader in city paving project. (Rotary 1954)*

B. D. Roberts was elected to the office of District Governor of Rotary and served in that capacity in 1954 and 1955.

Following his retirement from Highlands University he and Laura moved to Tempe, Arizona, where he accepted a teaching position at Arizona State University in 1957. He taught in the mathematics department there until 1963.

In Tempe he offered to teach Euclidean Geometry in the original Greek and had Generals at the many area military installations suggesting that their Colonels, etc. advance their education with Doc Roberts at Arizona State. Many other instructors audited his classes there.

Dale B. Gerdeman remembers,

*B. D's son Kenneth reminded me that when I was in the Bank of Las Vegas I had gone to his father with a problem. I found that banks used a formula for calculating refunds of prepaid interest on car loans if the loan was paid off before the due date. I had a minor in mathematics under Dr. Roberts but was unable to figure out how the formula had been derived. After a time I went to him and he immediately was able to show me how the formula had been derived and we agreed that it was accurate and fair to both the customer and the bank. (Gerdeman 1995)*

Ruth Ann Roberts Jones wrote about her mother:

Laura Ann Pike was born in Ottawa, Illinois, one of the eight children of Henry and Mary Ann Congram Pike. She graduated from high school in Francesville, Indiana, and from Valparaiso University in Valparaiso, Indiana. Laura Pike married B. D. Roberts on 8 September 1917.

She was initiated into the P.E.O. women's organization while she and B. D. lived in Fairfield, Iowa, and was a member and served as president and in other offices of Chapter H of P.E.O. in Las Vegas.

She was active in the First Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas and served as a member and officer of King's Daughters and the Ladies League. During the war she served as a Red Cross Gray Lady at the Army Hospital at Camp Luna. She was the leader of Girl Scout Troop 12 for several years during the 1940s, not too long after the Girl Scout Cabin was built in the city park. She was a member of the Sorosis Club, a weekly study club.

Laura and B. D. enjoyed playing bridge. During the late 1930s and early 1940s they belonged to a dinner bridge club with other members of the church: Margaret Cannon, Doc and Lydia Cobbett, Jimmie and Geneva Cox, Lozier and Virginia Funk, Leon and Katherine Miller, and Homer and Gertrude Tegler. They also belonged to a duplicate bridge club.

After B. D.'s death in Tempe, Laura continued to live there until 1969. At that time the Parkinson's disease she had developed a few years earlier became so severe that she moved from Tempe to Columbia, Missouri, to be with her daughter Ruth Ann Jones.

Byron David Roberts died in Tempe, Arizona on 25 May 1963.

Laura P. Roberts died in Columbia, Missouri on 17 October 1972.

Ruth Ann Roberts Jones, Kenneth P. Roberts and Dale B. Gerdeman 1995



## JOSEPH A. DAVIDSON

***“Prof” Davidson greatly influenced the life of many students, including Jerry Geist, former president of New Mexico Public Service Company. As a member of the Church, he served as an elder, treasurer, and trustee.***

Joseph A. Davidson was born 8 August 1900 on a farm in Callaway County, Missouri. His father died during Joe's boyhood. Davidson worked his way through Missouri State Teachers College waiting tables and serving as an advance man for Chautauqua shows (formerly traveling entertainment, lecture and concert programs). He earned his Bachelor of Science degree in 1923.

He married Gladys Hutchison in 1924 and they both taught school in Missouri until 1928 when they moved to Las Vegas, New Mexico. He was hired to teach math and science at Las Vegas High School. He continued his education for several summers and earned a master's degree in education from the University of Missouri.



In 1936 Davidson became Principal of the high school for ten years. He then chose to return to teaching for the last twenty years of his career. As a teacher, Davidson was much admired and respected by his students who affectionately called him

“Prof.” Many of his students went on to become math or science majors.

**Joseph A. & Gladys** When Prof decided to step down as an administrator and return to classroom teaching Ruth Ann Roberts, editor of the school paper, wrote the following tribute:

*In announcing his personal decision to leave administrative work for classroom teaching at Vegas High, Mr. Davidson has the assurance of the appreciation of all students, past and present. Prof has never been too busy to listen cheerfully to the problems of the students and never too harried to give sound advice. He has given V.H.S. students inspiration, has spurred ambition, and has encouraged them when everything seemed to go wrong.*

*By his pleasing personality, his understanding, patience, and kindly nature, he has endeared himself to the students. The most treasured memories of those about to graduate and those who have finished before us are those centered about*

*the friendly advice and consideration given by Prof. The name "Prof" stands as a symbol to present and past students of an ever-to-be remembered mentor and friend.*

Prof was senior class sponsor and participated annually in the traditional class climb up Mount Baldy, also known as Hermit's Peak, near Las Vegas.

For twenty summers he worked as a vacation replacement for ticket and freight agents on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway.

From 1950 to 1957 Davidson was active in the First Presbyterian Church as an elder. He also served as treasurer and as trustee for a number of years. He was a member of Kiwanis club for 35 years and served as District Governor in 1945.

A student, Joy Rutherford, wrote a whimsical tribute:

*I'll tell you the story of a sheik in our town,  
He's jaunty, he's frisky, he's always around  
He's usually calm, but becomes quite rash  
When questioned about his little mustache.  
His favorite sentence is, "You write a theme."  
If you haven't guessed it now you're off the beam;  
But when classes are over and to the hall you dash  
You'll meet the man with the curly mustache.  
We're really curious about his home life  
And wonder if his mustache is approved by his wife;  
And if to the corners his children all dash  
When he approaches with his wiry mustache.  
If you can't guess our hero by now  
We'll have to explain with a smile and a bow;  
It's our own dear "Prof"--give me room I must dash  
For here he comes now with his famous mustache.*

Prof's hobbies were bowling, gardening, woodworking and travel. He and his wife enjoyed playing bridge--an interest he carried into his retirement years. Mr. and Mrs. Davidson loved the out-of-doors and with their children spent time in the Gallinas Canyon and the Tres Ritos area hiking and picnicking.

The Davidsons had two daughters, Nancy Davidson Jordan who, with her family lives in Midland, Texas, and Nina Davidson Thompson who, with her family lives in Fort Collins, Colorado.

After retirement Prof and Gladys moved to Fort Collins, Colorado. She died there on 18 December 1973. In 1978 he relocated to Midland and entered Trinity Towers a retirement facility operated by the First Presbyterian Church with apartments for independent living. Here he participated in activities for residents and continued to travel some.

On 8/8/88 he celebrated his 88th birthday. In March of 1989, he entered the nursing care facility at Trinity Towers until his death on 19 May 1990. Memorial services were held in Midland and burial services were in Fort Collins.

Nancy Jordan and Nina Thompson 1996

## LILLIAN E. ROGERS

***Delta Kappa Gamma selected Rogers as its "Most Outstanding in the State" member in 1968. Inducted in the ranks of "Who's Who among American Women," she was a professional who was devoted to seeing her students achieve success.***

Lillian Rogers was born on 3 December 1906 to Rosalie Ludeman and Charles Rogers in Las Vegas, New Mexico. In 1906 Las Vegas was a bustling railroad and commercial center. The one-time stop on the Santa Fe Trail catered to the growth industries and businesses of the time, offering its citizenry a wide variety of employment options.



and offices of the district headquarters of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway, the austere, institutional buildings of the state's premier mental health-care facility, or the attractive and reputable teachers college, New Mexico Normal University, later NM Highlands University.

**Lillian Rogers** Small wonder, then, that a native of these environs would develop a passionate interest in business. Lillian's quest to know more about the mechanics of her community's lifeblood led her to pursue an education first in her own backyard, and later, at colleges and universities on each coast.

From 1920-1924, Lillian attended New Mexico Normal University Training School, receiving her high school diploma in 1924. For one year after that, she attended New Mexico Normal University. The next three years found Lillian studying in California. On 16 May 1928 she graduated from the University of California at Berkeley with cum laude honors, earning her associate degree in business.

Not long afterward, Lillian returned to New Mexico to be closer to her family and accepted a teaching assignment in the mining community of Dawson, a company-owned, coal town in Colfax County, northwest of Las Vegas. For the nine-month school year that commenced only two months prior to the great stock market crash of 1929 she received a salary of \$1,100. When school let out that year, Lillian came back to her hometown because her mother Rosalie's health had begun to fail, and Lillian cared for her and would continue to do so until her death.

Las Vegas was experiencing a depression before the stock market crash, but when the crash came it hit hard. In those years Las Vegas was two separate municipalities. The municipality west of the Gallinas River was known as the Town of Las Vegas, and the municipality east of the river as the City of Las Vegas. The depression brought empty shops and broken dreams in both communities.

Fortunately, Lillian was able to secure a position as an elementary school teacher with the Las Vegas Town school system. From 1930-1938, she served respectively as a third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grade teacher. From 1938-1944 she taught fifth and sixth grades. Her salary during this period increased from \$1,100 to \$1,520. The State of New Mexico granted her a lifetime elementary teaching certificate on 14 December 1936.

While teaching Lillian continued her education, taking classes during the summer. In the summer of 1931, she attended the University of California at Los Angeles. She earned eight hours credit at UCLA, forty-six hours at New Mexico Normal University from 1928-1933, twenty-eight hours from the same institution between 1937 and 1941. From 1941-1944, she enrolled at Highlands University as a full-time graduate student earning forty-eight hours. She received her Master of Arts degree in business in 1944.

Upon receiving the master's degree, she began teaching business education at Las Vegas High School. World War II had started while she taught fifth and sixth grades. At the war's end in 1946 Lillian began planning another giant step up the career ladder. She applied for an instructor position at the New Mexico Normal School. In a copy of a letter dated 20 July 1946, Edward Eyring, then president of New Mexico Normal University, invited Lillian Rogers to serve as an "instructor of Secretarial Science, at a salary of \$2,700." She, of course, accepted the offer, beginning the next phase of her career.

After two years of apprenticing as an instructor, Lillian earned a promotion to assistant professor of business administration in 1947, at an annual salary of \$3,490. In 1955 she achieved status as an associate professor. In 1952 her performance of her duties earned her the opportunity to serve as Acting Department Chair.

Again, Lillian furthered her graduate education. In 1948 she used her time off to pursue her doctorate in education and by 1955 she had completed the courses, lacking only the examination. In 1954 she was the recipient of the M. Margaret Stroh award for graduate study in business and administration at New York University.

Her tenure at the university gave her the opportunity to share her wisdom and years of experience with her students. In addition, during those years, she won many awards and held many important positions and offices in state and national business and education-related organizations. She was one of the early sponsors of the State Commerce Club. This organization gave high school students throughout the State the opportunity to be recognized for outstanding performance in business courses such as typing, shorthand and accounting. New Mexico Normal University sponsored the Club and held a convention annually that was known as Highlands Day in Las Vegas.

Many issues of the *Highlands Candle* celebrate Lillian Rogers as a sponsor of the State Commerce Club. Editions of the university paper and the *Las Vegas Daily Optic* feature photographs and articles about Lillian. Whether they capture an image of a presentation she made to a student at a State Commerce Club event, a glimpse of Lillian among her colleagues in Delta Kappa Gamma (the honor society for female educators), or a word-created image of the achievements and accolades she earned, each creates an impression of the woman as a caring professional.

In 1957 she presented awards to winners at the annual banquet of the State Commerce Club. She planned the annual meeting in 1961. Under her guidance the member rolls swelled to 1,426 in 1956. Lillian edited the organization's bi-monthly newsletter from 1952 through 1960. The name was later changed to the State Business Awards under the guidance of Lucille Sampson. The organization no longer exists.

She maintained an active membership in Delta Kappa Gamma. A member since 1940, Lillian held the posts of chapter president, correspondence secretary, and recording secretary. She was also active in the New Mexico Education Association, the United Business Education Association, American Association of University Professors, Delta Pi Epsilon (graduate business fraternity) and served as sponsor of Delta Sigma Epsilon.

On 2 February 1959 she was inducted in the ranks of "Who's Who among American Women." Lillian was the author of several scholarly articles for local and national organizations. "The Error Parade," "Student Deposits in the Bank of Future Success," and "A Handbook for Transcription Students" all published in the *Highlands News Letter*, "Rich Experiences in D.S.E." for the *Shield*; "Twenty-Sixth International Economic Course" in *New Mexico Business Educators*, and was the co-author of "Valid Standards from Local Survey" for *United Business Education Association Forum*.

Supervisors, administrators, colleagues, and friends lauded her efforts and the positive influence she effected in the lives of those she encountered in those years.

Retiring in 1970, Lillian turned her attention to a new host of activities. A member and one-time president of the Pilot Club, a service organization for women, she received awards for perfect attendance and in recognition for her volunteer service. Additionally, she maintained a membership in the American Association of University Women, the E.S.A. Society, and the American Cancer Society. Lillian volunteered many of her retirement hours to the Hospital Auxiliary. She also served on the advisory board of Luna Vocational Technical Institute.

Lillian was accustomed to a heavy work schedule and retirement gave her time to become very active in church affairs. She became Superintendent of the Sunday Schools in 1971 and 1972, treasurer of the church in 1973 and treasurer of the United Presbyterian Women in 1974. In that year she was the church delegate to the Presbytery and in 1975 was elected Moderator of the Presbytery of Santa Fe. Again in 1977 she was the delegate to the Presbytery and was elected Moderator of the Presbytery of Santa Fe through 1978.

She served as a member or chairman of a variety of other church committees such as Interpretation and Support Committee for four years, Coordinator of the United Presbyterian Women, retreat planning committee and cookbook committee. She represented the church on the Northeastern Regional Hospital Board for about four years. She served a three-year term as deacon, and a three-year term as an elder. She was on the music and worship committee, the personnel committee and the evangelism committee. For a time before her death in 1989 she was the oldest living member of the church.

While the historical records paint a clear image of Lillian Rogers as a professional devoted to achieving and encouraging others to seek success, Lillian's own life remains somewhat of a mystery. Close friend and neighbor Barbara Kugler recalled Lillian was for the most part reserved and reticent in her private life. Barbara also found that Lil had an enigmatic restiveness about her on other occasions. She recounted a story about a trip when the two of them went to Albuquerque, in order to participate in the wedding ceremony of Lillian's niece. At the reception family members paid tribute to their Aunt Lil. After the round of pleasantries, however, Lil abruptly said to Barbara, "Let's get out of here."

Lillian served God's will by helping others discover that they too had gifts and abilities worth sharing. When she passed away in 1989 she left a special legacy to those who knew and loved her.

Siobhan Croto and Dale B. Gerdeman 1991

## ARLETTA BAILEY

***Arletta Bailey was a person who felt she had a mission in life—to be her “brother’s keeper.” She fulfilled her goal by being a dedicated professional, a deeply concerned humanitarian, and a true friend to people of all walks of life. (Margaret Aragon 1986)***

Arletta Bailey was born 1 October 1908 in Jasonville, Indiana, to John Bailey and Ava Condor Bailey. She was the first of eleven children. Arletta's mother and grandparents ran a boarding home where Ava cooked and cleaned, while John, a Spanish-American War veteran, worked as a coal miner, farmer and strip miner. John was a wanderer, trading farmland often with out-of-state farmers. Arletta received her teacher training at Indiana University in Bloomington.



his John's trades and there they lost a son, Bobby Wayne, to spinal meningitis. When their father again decided to trade land, Arletta and her two sisters, Geneva and Thelmarie ("Thel"), had tired of moving and asked their parents to let them stay. Arletta, already teaching in Taos, helped her two sisters finish high school in 1928-29. She accepted a teaching job in Española the next year, where she taught and lived until 1945. During the depression years in Española, only one member per family was

allowed to teach in the county. It was decided that Geneva would continue teaching in the county and Arletta would teach in the city schools.

### **Arletta Bailey**

Geneva moved to Oklahoma, and in the meantime, Thel and Arletta took in 18-month-old twin girls whom the welfare department had asked them to keep for two weeks until they could be placed in a permanent home. Arletta and Thel, always willing, were often called on to care for the homeless, unplaced, or abused children of that area. They fell in love with the twins and decided to keep them permanently. Thel babysat for one year until her marriage to Ernest Salazar of Española. Arletta legally adopted Ruth and Evelyn in 1939. Being their permanent mother, she gave them middle names, adding Janet to Ruth and Joyce to Evelyn. Arletta's sensitivity to those in need and her love for children played a big part in her decision to raise the twins, although when asked why she kept them, she joked, "They never would leave."

Arletta and the twins moved to Las Vegas in August 1945. She continued her education in the summers at New Mexico Highlands

University, earning her Master of Arts degree in 1947. An active member of the Las Vegas City Schools Education Association, Arletta served in various offices and headed numerous committees. As a member of the state education association, she participated in developing the teacher certification standards through work in the Teacher Education and Professional Standards Commission, popularly called the "TEPS Commission." It took several years, many meetings, and much work to establish the present teacher certification requirements. She received the "Teacher of the Year" award for devoted and loyal service.

Arletta's teaching record is as follows:

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| 1928-29 | Taos, elementary teacher   |
| 1929-36 | Espanola, elementary principal   |
| 1936-46 | Española, teacher  |
| 1946-49 | Las Vegas, acting elementary principal   |
| 1949-69 | Las Vegas, elementary principal  |
| 1969    | Retired from Las Vegas schools   |
| 1969-71 | Many Farms, Arizona, volunteer teacher of English to Native American students and adults |

Arletta was a member of Delta Kappa Gamma, an international honor society. She served in different offices of Eta Chapter. As its president in 1952, she led the members for two years doing purposeful work. Succeeding officers sought her advice and, until her death, she became the authority on Eta Chapter matters. The Delta Kappa Gamma society at the international level selected her as one of two teachers to implement the Navajo Project North American Community College, a position she took after her retirement from the Las Vegas City Schools in 1969. She was often guest speaker at National conventions as well as local events concerning the Navajo Project.

Arletta was an active member of the First Presbyterian Church. She was superintendent of the Sunday school for the years 1950-1958, 1964, and 1967-1969. She was an elder and a member of the choir for many years. On 7 November 1982 the Presbyterian Women of the First Presbyterian Church U.S.A. presented Arletta with an Honorary Life Membership.

Her concern for all people's physical, intellectual and spiritual welfare led her into a variety of activities. Her twin daughters believe her most notable deed was her adopting and rearing the two of them. In school she was instrumental in seeing that needy children had decent clothing and shoes and providing jobs for children that needed a hot lunch. She demonstrated her sensitivity to the needs of her friends by inviting those who didn't have close families to her home to share holidays and called or visited those who were ill. She always arrived at meetings with her car full, remembering to offer rides to those who might need one.



Mrs. Margaret Aragon, a close friend and fellow teacher, remembers:

*ARLETTA BAILEY, A PROFESSIONAL, A HUMANITARIAN AND FRIEND*

*Arletta taught "Methods of teaching language arts" at New Mexico Highlands University during her summer vacations. As an elementary school principal, she involved her teachers in the administration of the school by seeking and acting upon their input. As a school administrator, she gained the respect of her peers for making decisions based on what was most convenient and advantageous. She devoted many hours to tutoring slow-achieving students in language arts, and low-performing students in other studies by coming to school early and staying after school, giving of her free time. Her sense of humor helped to pull people together in many difficult situations.*

Among Arletta's close friends were Ruth Crabtree, Leona Gerk, Rosa Springfelds and Mae Dixon, who wrote the following:

*When a formal teacher's meeting was necessary to make important policy decisions Arletta somehow always seemed to present the problems in such a way that we shared in decisions. She never said directly, "We will do so and so," but rather she would say, "What do you think we should do about this situation?" She would listen to our suggested solutions, and then, tactfully, present her ideas, leading us all together on decision making. One of my happiest memories of Douglas School and Arletta, is our "sing-a-long" the last afternoon before Christmas vacation. All the children were assembled on the three stairways, and in the main floor hallway, placing the piano in the center. With Cully Butterfield at the piano, and Arletta leading, we would sing all the old familiar Christmas carols, and it seemed we did almost "raise the roof."*

One of the twins, Evelyn Wootton, wrote,

*Mom was a wonderful mother to us, so kind, patient, loving, committed, disciplining, a good hardworking provider, with a wonderful sense of humor.*

*She enriched our lives with her total giving, love, wisdom and fairness. Life was not easy for mom raising two girls by herself. She suffered severe asthma all her life yet was always there for a child in need of care or material necessities. She housed and cared for Angelina, an abused girl of eight for over a year; Neil, a boy of nine stayed with us for months, and others we can't name, who stayed three, five or ten days. Mom's love for us, her grandchildren and great grandchildren was felt and seen as an encourager at all games, as practice supervisor for piano lessons, as tutor and as educational tour guide through four states and ending up at her family's home-town in Scotland, Indiana. Always giving all of us of her wisdom and love we would often call her the Great White Father, or when she spoke we compared her to the TV ads of "E. F. Hutton" and "Don't fool with mother nature."*

*Mom was always loading her car with friends or family to take on cross-country trips to New York, New Orleans, California and Indiana or short jaunts across little traveled country roads sharing her love and knowledge for her country and its history and beauty. Also, her deep concern and regard for making life simpler and better for these*

*loved ones was a constant enjoyment to her. She was never too sick to help work through problems for any of us.*

Her friend, Leona Gerk, said "Whoever Arletta touched, she lifted up."

Arletta's father, mother, and sister Geneva had passed on before her. Arletta settled all business and family affairs with her girls on Thanksgiving Day 1985, giving explicit instructions for her funeral and burial. She knew she was being called home. Arletta passed away on 4 January 1986, and the family lovingly carried out her instructions and wishes which she had taken care of down to the last detail, burying her ashes where and in what manner in the vase she had chosen. A memorial service was held on 8 January 1986 at the First Presbyterian Church with Rev. Don Wales officiating. A private interment of ashes was held the same day at St. Anthony's Cemetery in Las Vegas. Her headstone, a huge granite rock she had picked from her granddaughter's land, marks her grave.

Evelyn Wootton 1992

## J. A. SCHUFLE AND LOIS M. SCHUFLE

*For too long I have lived more or less in a fish bowl, being constantly on display before my students, trying to set them a good example. Lois was a dietician and served in that capacity at Las Vegas Hospital for twenty years until she retired. She was often called upon to help organize bake sales and other activities involving cooking at our church.*

*J. A. Schufle*

Reflections On Younger Days.

"La, tout n'est qu'orclre et beaute,  
Luxe, calme, et volupte."

- "L'Invitation au Voyage" Ch. Baudelaire.

They say that when a man gets old, he comes to forget things that happened a short time before, but is able to recall with clarity things that occurred a long time ago. My first memories are but fragments, bits that happened



**"Jay" & Lois Schufle**

here and there, that seem to have happened all at the same time, isolated but contemporaneous. I find that keeping a notebook or journal is a great help in recalling days gone by. But also, when I use these notes in trying to write something about myself, what I write has little of real philosophical interest in it and tends to be a humdrum account of everyday occurrences. So, I will try to do something different here. I will let my mind wander where it will in the matter of subject, and then attempt to make it all into something worth reading. All this is done at the request of Dale Gerdeman, who is collecting biographies of members of the Las Vegas First Presbyterian Church.

I think it was that first great impression of the wildness of the West that helped Lois and me make up our minds that here in New Mexico was where we wanted to live when we finally settled down after the war. Of course, we made no definite plans then or had any idea where we would eventually settle. But I sometimes think we made up our minds unconsciously; Lois and I must have both made some kind of determination then in 1946, so that when the time came two years later to choose where we would take our first job, we ended up in Socorro.

The two years in between the time we first saw the West, and the time when we came there to live, are like one big blur now. I started teaching mathematics, algebra and trigonometry to girls at Flora Stone Mather College of Western Reserve University in Ohio. All I can remember is that I gave them large doses of "Mathematics for the Millions" by Lancelot Hoyben, which remains one of my favorite books in mathematics.

At this time, I was taking courses and beginning my research in chemistry in the Graduate School of the University. At the end of the first year Western Reserve University Professor Harold Simmons Booth talked to me like a Dutch uncle: "What are you planning to do when you finish up here, Schufle?" "I think I'd like to teach chemistry in a college somewhere in the West." "Then you'd better give up that cushy job you have teaching math to the Mather girls and put in some time as a laboratory assistant in chemistry. That is where you will learn how to teach chemistry."

I followed Dr. Booth's advice and have never been sorry for it. I have not always been so pliant in accepting the advice of others. I have given enough advice in my time to others, goodness knows, and I have enough to do now to arrange my thoughts for my retirement. I can safely leave the giving of advice to my younger colleagues. It was Socrates, I believe, who said the young men should be instructed, in middle age they should practice doing good, and in old age they should withdraw from all occupations and live at their own discretion. That's what I want to do to be discrete in my living. My decision to leave Socorro and move to Las Vegas was more my own decision than was our decision to move to New Mexico in the first place.

I had been a professor of chemistry at New Mexico Tech for sixteen years in 1964 when my old chief, Dr. Morris Stubbs, retired. I was then made acting head of the department. Two years before I had spent a sabbatical year in Dublin, as a visiting professor at University College Dublin, and I had a taste of a real university, not just a scientific Institute, as New Mexico Tech was and still is. I asked myself if I would like my own children to go to New Mexico Tech, and I had to answer no. So then, I asked myself, why should I continue to devote my life to such an institution? And then, in the middle of the school year I got a letter from Dr. Clarence Stuckwisch from New Mexico Highlands University in Las Vegas, asking me if I would be interested in a position at that university. I was. We moved to Las Vegas in 1964 with our twins, Jeannie and Joey, then 11 years old.

Las Vegas is a town of many different faces, groups and cultural patterns, much more so than Socorro ever was. Socorro has a large number of people of Spanish descent, but the town is run largely by the Anglo element. But in Las Vegas it is much different. Hispanic people make up more than three-fourths of the population, and they exert much more influence in politics, although it is true that the banks and businesses are mostly Anglo-owned. The cultural background of the people here is much

more oriented toward their Spanish heritage than it ever seemed to be in Socorro. Socorro always seemed closely linked to Albuquerque, whereas Las Vegas seems more related to Santa Fe.

When I began to write this chapter, I called it reflections on younger days, but now I find I have wandered up to the present. It is hard to separate the past from the present sometimes. That is why I enjoy our cabin Springville at Cloudcroft, which we bought back in 1960 when we were still living in Socorro. It is now the oldest property we have, both in terms of our ownership, and in terms of its actual age, since it was built by Stanley Bevan in 1910, and is listed on the New Mexico Cultural Properties list. And so is our house in Las Vegas, built in 1913 by the M. M. Sundt Construction Company for C. W. G. Ward.

Both Lois and I were born in Akron, Ohio, I on 21 December 1917, Lois on 19 May 1919. We lived and grew up on opposite sides of town, but eventually we met at Akron University, where we both were graduated, I with a B.S. in 1938, and M.S. in 1942, and Lois with a B.S. in 1940. My parents came to Akron in 1916, where my father, Albert Bernard Schufle, came to take a job in a factory making molds for tires. His father in turn had immigrated to America from Danzig, Poland, in 1866 and settled in Chicago, where my father was born. He had two sisters who were born in Poland, and my father grew up speaking Polish as well as English. My mother, Daisy Susanna (Frick) Schufle was born in Irwin, Pennsylvania, of Swiss and Pennsylvania Dutch stock.

My father, born Adalbert Bernard Schufletowski, was born in Chicago in 1876. His father, Francis Schufletowski, was born near Nowe, Poland, located on the Wisla (Vistula) River about seventy-five kilometers south of Gdansk-Danzig. Francis' father, in turn, my great-grandfather, Mathew Schufletowski, was a cattle dealer who had moved down the Wisla River Valley from Krakow in the early part of the nineteenth century. My father said that his mother always called him Adalbert, so he had shortened his first name as well as his last name. These two names, Adalbert and Bernard, tell us something about his mother and father, since both names they chose are those of dedicated saints of the Roman Catholic Church. Saint Adalbert (ca. 939-997), was Bishop of Prague (ca. 982), in Bohemia, his birthplace. Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (ca. 1090-1153) is regarded by the Roman Catholic Church as the "last of the fathers." He founded more than seventy monasteries. Monks of his reformed branch of the Cistercians are often called Bernardines. So, my father's parents must have been devout Catholics, and my father was raised in that faith, although he had ceased to practice it actively when he married my mother, who belonged to the Dutch Reformed Church. He always used to say that he "had enough religion as a boy to last me the rest of my life."

Kierkegaard said that life is lived forwards but understood backwards. And this is the case with the fathers of most of us and my father was no

exception. None of us gave him the appreciation he deserved, and only after he was gone did any of us begin to understand him. But there were occasional glimpses of the mystery that was my father, how he loved books, and would sometimes bring home a whole boxful of second-handbooks for a family feast of reading. He also bought us a five-volume encyclopedia.

There were memories he would occasionally reveal, like about the time he met Ignace Jan Paderewski, the great pianist. He had been part of the welcoming committee of Polish-Americans to greet the great Polish pianist and patriot when he came to Chicago, and my father got to sit on the stage during the ceremonies. He heard him play his famous "Minuet," and he could even play passages from it on the mouth organ, the only musical instrument he ever played. After I started taking piano lessons at age eleven he took me to hear a piano recital at the old Akron Armory, and I believe it was another Polish pianist, Brallowsky, who played.

He never talked about his youth except to say that he had been raised by priests and nuns. He did tell us that he had worked as a lumberjack and he knew a lot about trees. He would take my brother John and me for walks and tell us how to recognize trees from their bark and leaves.

He was a hard worker and faithful provider for the family. He worked as a machinist at the Akron Rubber Mold Company and later for the Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. I remember his Firestone job particularly because we were able to swim in the Firestone pool on south Main Street in Akron. After the 1929 stock market crash he was laid off at Firestone and had long periods of unemployment. By that time he was in his late fifties and it was hard for him to find other work, even if times had been normal.

When Franklin Roosevelt brought Social Security and the Works Progress Administration (WPA) my mother got him to get a job with the WPA at Nimisila Dam. He worked the required 30 months to get eligibility for a Social Security pension.

Daisy Susanna (Frick) Schufle was born in Irwin, Pennsylvania, on 7 January 1881, the daughter of Joseph Lenhart Frick and Susanna (Buzzard) Frick. My mother named me Joseph Albert, after both my grandfather and my father, but always called me "J.A." to keep both happy, I'm sure. Anyway, that's the name I went by throughout my school years, but which name was shortened to "Jay" by most people.

My mother was what is commonly referred to in dress shops as "petite." Just under five feet tall, she made up in character and determination what she may have lacked in stature. She had lived most of her life, before she met my father, in Irwin where she was the only one of eight brothers and sisters to be graduated from high school. I still have some of what my father used to call "Ma's barrellful of diplomas." One is her diploma from Irwin High School, dated 1900. She had great respect for education and educated people and always encouraged me to go as far as I could in my education. Mother was happy in my choice of Lois as my wife,

partly because we met at college; she was also a college graduate, in home economics. We were married in 1942 after I had been called into the U.S. Army. But all through the four years of the war Lois and I always talked about how I would return to graduate school after the war was over. So I've always had nothing but encouragement from my family members to carry on my education. Not everyone has been as fortunate.

Lois' father, Raymond Ward Mytholar (1887-1945), I remember as a man of modest stature, about five feet seven, bald-headed, with a broken nose acquired as a young man in a motorcycle accident in which he also lost part of a finger. He had worked in an Akron bank, but later for the state of Ohio as a state bank examiner. He was out of town a good deal examining banks around the state. His father, Harvey Milton Mytholar (1864-1930), was a skilled cabinet maker, and the Mytholar home in Akron had many heavy pieces of furniture that were Harvey's handiwork, and the despair of Lois' mother who had to move them around when cleaning.

Ida Mytholar was active in Girl Scouts and after Raymond died in 1945 she worked as a receptionist for the YWCA in Akron for more than a decade before she retired. She moved in 1972 to Ft. Myers, Florida, where she had an apartment near her son, Bob, and his family. But it soon became impossible for her to live by herself, so in 1974 she came to live with Lois and me in Las Vegas, until she died in 1985. She attended the First Presbyterian Church with us.

After World War II, Lois and I returned to Ohio where I attended Western Reserve University to work on research in chemistry for my doctor's degree. Lois worked at the Collonade Cafeterias as a dietician during those two years. We shared an apartment with a wonderful old couple, Elizabeth and William Wheeler, who had been musicians in New York City in their younger days, and Mr. Wheeler was a voice teacher at the Cleveland Institute of Music. We met many of the music world of Cleveland in those days: Beryl Rubenstein, president of the Cleveland Institute of Music; Herbert Elwell, music critic for the Cleveland Plain Dealer and composer of art songs; Arthur Lesser, concert pianist, also at the Institute, who lived across the hall from our apartment; and many others. And of course, we attended many programs given by the Cleveland Orchestra under Georges Szell.

My first job after Western Reserve was as assistant professor of chemistry at New Mexico School of Mines in Socorro, now called New Mexico Tech. I had the opportunity to learn good research techniques under the great president of the school, Dr. E. J. Workman. I taught classes in physical chemistry and freshman chemistry, and developed research ideas of my own, including my work on demineralization of water for which I received an U.S. patent. I also started my work on structure of water, and developed my own method of dating of arid zone sediments, both projects

on which I continued to work at Highlands University in Las Vegas. Monographs on these latter two topics, are in the Donnelly Library.

We moved to Las Vegas in 1964 and bought our home at 1301 Eighth Street from Ralph Carlisle Smith, later president of Highlands University. In 1977 I took another short sabbatical leave. I went by myself to Uppsala, Sweden, where I gathered material for my biography of the great 18th century Swedish chemist Torbern Bergman. On this trip I also visited East Berlin and London, where I met two great philosophers, Sir Charles Snow and Sir Karl Popper. From Popper I got some of my subsequent interest in philosophy of science.

I am finally to the point where I have little else to say except to write about myself. And even here I have two other books of autobiography already in print, and copies are available from the library of New Mexico Highlands University in Las Vegas: "*Ariadne's Thread*," Meadow Press, Las Vegas, New Mexico, 1988; and "*Search for The Mountain*," Meadow Press, 1992. And I had a period in the late 1960s and 1970s when I wrote quite a bit of poetry, which was collected in a book, "*Of Birds and Woodcutting*," Meadow Press, 1991. I will include one poem here, a short one that is one of my favorites:

Response to Emily D.

She says, beautifully:  
To make a Prairie  
It takes a clover and a bee,  
One clover and one bee  
And reverie.

The reverie alone will do  
if bees are few.

To which I reply, irreverently  
To cross a Prairie  
It takes energy,  
And a philosophy  
That wants more than reverie  
On one clover and one bee.  
The energy alone is plenty

If bees are many.

I am happy to be able to say that the church has always been a central part of our lives. When I still had a singing voice, I sang solos in church and in various performances of Handel's "Messiah," Steiner's "Crucifixion," and



similar oratorios. I even did the tenor solos in the "Messiah" with orchestra at Ohio Wesleyan University in the 1940s. In the Las Vegas church I directed the choir and sang solos for about ten years until I lost my voice. After that my musical activities were confined to occasional services as church organist.

We have both served terms as deacons, elders, treasurers, and on various church committees. In Socorro, where we lived for 16 years, Lois was an active member of the Ladies' Aid and I was the organizer and director of the choir in the Socorro First Presbyterian Church.

As a former administrator at Highlands University I was occasionally called upon to help organize activities such as church fund drives. For several years Dale Gerdeman and I directed an annual every-member canvas. We used a program provided by the National Presbyterian Church called "Dimensions in Stewardship Commitment" (DISC), which emphasized percentage giving, and we even suggested a goal of 5% of income as a reasonable target for giving to the church. As I look back on this now it all seems perhaps a little foolhardy, but I was never one to "pussy-foot" around a subject, no matter how delicate, and I have always prided myself on taking a direct approach to any topic. One of my favorite church activities over the years has been the Adult Sunday School Class, which I have helped to teach occasionally, and which has always been an important part of my intellectual and religious growth. One of the weakest parts of the morning worship, as it has seemed to me, is the fact that there is no chance for audience participation, except in the formal responsive readings and the hymns. All my training in educational theory has emphasized the need for response from the students in the class to whatever the teacher is trying to teach. When Al Juterbock was our pastor we discussed this and Al even tried to get some audience response to his sermons by pausing at the end and asking if anyone had any comments, or questions to ask. I think the shock was too much for our congregation because this practice never seemed to catch on. But we do have a lot of fun and learn a lot in that adult class where everyone has a chance to say what he is thinking. One of the main advantages of the First Presbyterian Church is its being a congregation of thinking people.

I wrote a history of the First Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas *Preparing the Way*, in 1970 as part of the celebration of the Centennial of our church.

Lois Schufle died on 21 September 1997.

J. A. Schufle died on 7 January 2001.

J. A. Schufle 1995



## MERRITT AND MURIEL McGAHAN

An autobiography by Merritt McGahan, ed. by J. A. Schufle

***I miss all my friends in Las Vegas and always enjoy going there for a visit. Looking back on my life, I am very happy—I feel that I have had a rewarding and productive life and am grateful for all the wonderful people I have known and experience I have had.***

I was born in Los Angeles on 8 March 1920. My father was a plumber and my mother a housewife who painted china. I remember very little of my father since he was killed in a brush fire in southern California when I was only three years old.

I remember kneeling on a bench in my grandfather's breakfast room and looking out at that fire going across the mountains. My father had gone up there to see what was going on, because he was afraid that our house might



be threatened. It was up in a canyon in Glendale. But he never came back. I also remember running up that canyon with my older brother Blynn in our wagon. We lived on Chevy Chase Drive in a sparsely settled area. Six months after our father died our younger brother Richard was born. In 1925, our mother married Harry Craigmile.

No one could have had a better stepfather than Harry Craigmile. He was very kind to us three boys, but also was strict. He had been a fairly unsuccessful farmer in Iowa. He came to California to

join his brother and sister there. After they were married, he and my mother bought some land on the Mexican border, in a little place called San Ysidro. They planned to raise vegetables, since the farm was on a river. He planted the farm with celery, but just when the celery was about to mature, a dam broke in Mexico on the river. The water came rushing down in waves coming toward us. We quickly loaded a few possessions and ourselves in an old car with no windows, and drove up to Tulavista, a town several miles away. The flood washed away the whole farm except for the house and barn. It even washed the topsoil away, so that when it was over there was no farm left.

The next few years our family moved to several towns in the San Diego area. I remember at one point my father was working for 25 cents an hour at hard labor. Eventually our folks bought a house in La Mesa and we lived there for several years. Then we packed up and moved to the San

**Merritt & Muriel McGahan**

Joaquin Valley. At this time I was about ten years old and had no understanding of why we moved, but I have since wondered if the loan on our house was foreclosed.

I'll never forget the day we arrived in the San Joaquin Valley where we were going to live. It was on 7 March 1930. I remember that day vividly because the next day was going to be my 10th birthday, and I wondered all day if anyone would remember in view of our arrival at my mother's relatives. Well they did remember. We lived in a house belonging to Cousin Gene one of my mother's relatives.

Eventually we moved to Dinuba, California, where my step-father became the foreman of an orange grove. We stayed there through my first two years in high school. My third year we spent in Kingsbury, California, while my fourth year was in Dina, California, and I was graduated from high school there.

My grandparents helped me to the extent of sending me \$15 a month, so I was able to go to college at Fresno State College, where I stayed two and a half years. Then I ran out of money and decided to join the Army in February of 1941. I went through basic training at Moffit Field, California, then was transferred to Chico, California. My classification was clerk/typist. I wanted to go overseas so I asked for a transfer to Casper, Wyoming, where a bomber group was getting ready to go to England. I spent more than a year in England, in a small town called Seething, near Norwich. I was frustrated at Norwich because I was on the ground, and the action was in the air over the mainland of Europe. I asked to be transferred to the infantry. By that time, I had become a staff sergeant. But now I was reduced to a plain buck sergeant, and did six weeks more training, this time in the infantry. I was transferred to the mainland, at the time when American troops had just crossed the Rhine River. I was assigned to the 93rd Infantry, which had already crossed the Rhine when I joined them. I was immediately assigned to be a squad leader, and my platoon and squad were on the front line, as we were advancing through Germany. So, there I was a clerk-typist, with no wartime experience, leading American troops across Germany. We were advancing on Frankfurt-am-Main, and as we would come to a village we would search for German soldiers. In one village where the houses usually had barns attached, I went in by a side door, and a German soldier came in by another door. I called "Halt!" He headed toward an opposite door and I shot him in the back. It has troubled me ever since, because I think of what that soldier's family lost in the war. Thinking he was still alive, I called a medic, but when he looked at the man he said, "I'm a medic, not an undertaker."

The war ended and with so many soldiers in Europe the army devised programs to keep them busy until they could be sent home. I was fortunate to be assigned to an educational program conducted in Beuren, France. Beuren had many big hotels and the army converted rooms in the hotels

into classrooms. I took a class in algebra and one in botany. I remember they had converted a dining room into a chemistry laboratory with a chemistry table down the middle.

They were sending troops home in the order in which they came. My number came up before I had finished with the classes, but I was anxious to go home, so I boarded the troop ship Brandon Victory and we sailed for America. I'll never forget as we approached the harbor at New York, a small naval vessel came and circled our ship. We waved, and in the sky above a sky writer was writing, "Welcome Home," and I thought it was so great that they were welcoming us. But then I looked again and it said "Welcome Home Navy." It was Navy Day of October of 1945.

I was 24 when I returned from the war. I took a job at a bank for about six months, and then decided that a bank job was not my future. I applied for admission to the University of California-Berkeley and was admitted. It was the fall of 1946 and I had the GI Bill to pay for tuition and living expenses; and settled in the men's dormitory in Richmond, some distance from Berkeley.

We decided to have a dance at the dormitory and invite some girls from Berkeley. I went to that dance. I'm not a very good mixer, but I saw this beautiful woman--I was always looking for a tall woman, my height to dance with. I asked her to dance and told her my name was Merritt. She said her name was Muriel. After that dance we dated some more, fell in love, and in October 1946 I asked her to marry me and she said yes. We went to Hanford so she could meet my family, and they all loved her as I did. In December 1946 we were married on Christmas Eve in the Christian Church in Hanford. We went on our honeymoon in a car I had borrowed from my folks, since I didn't have a car. We went down the coast to Los Angeles, and then to Death Valley, which may sound weird for a honeymoon, but Death Valley is warm in December, and not blistering hot.

We moved into a small apartment in Richmond and began our lives together. We bought an inexpensive used car. I had not saved any money, but Muriel had--she had about \$1500 which enabled us to buy this used car. I transferred to the College of Agriculture in Davis, California, for graduate work, because I wanted to study with Katherine Esau, the foremost plant anatomist in the world then. Esau was a wonderful teacher, and I did my thesis on the entomology of tocsin barley. I received my PhD. in botany in 1953. I found a job teaching botany at the University of Rhode Island and we bought our first house there.

By this time, we had two children, Susan, born in 1949, and Thomas, born in 1951. A friend at college told me that the United Fruit Company was hiring people to work on the anatomy of bananas and they had a big laboratory in Norwood, Maine. I applied and was accepted. We moved to Norwood, bought another house there, and I went to work for the United Fruit Company. At first, I only made occasional trips to Honduras, where

the bananas were grown, but eventually they asked me to move there permanently. So we moved to La Mia, Honduras, where the company provided us with housing. I worked on the embryology of bananas. We attended a small church there, and at some point, I'm not really sure when, I decided I wanted to become a minister.

As always, Muriel supported me, so I applied to several theological seminaries. I was accepted at two or three, but the one that intrigued me the most was Union Theological Seminary in New York City. It was adjacent to Riverside Church, one of the most beautiful churches in New York. We moved to New York in 1963, and again we lived in student housing.

The first year of seminary, my work-study assignment was with a Black church in Harlem. This was one of the most revealing experiences of my life. I had never known Black people, and it really became an eye-opener to me. My job was to help organize rent strikes, because the tenement landlords exploited the Black residents of East Harlem. The pastor of the church was named Mel Schoonover, who was not Black, but who had a physical disability that forced him to use a wheelchair. He was an incredible person who taught me a great deal about life and living. The church was upstairs, and two men would always carry Mel up those stairs, and he would preach from his wheelchair. I would visit church members in their apartments, and I got to know them very well. I realized I had finally made the grade when one of the women called me "a Black Son of a Bitch." I knew

I was accepted. The second and third year of seminary, I was assigned to work at the Riverside Church as Director of their Campus Ministry, and I worked on the Columbia University campus. As I ended the three-year program of study, I began to think again about a job. I suggested to Muriel that instead of being ordained as a campus minister, I should seek a job in University administration, where I could work within the system, to apply the things I had learned in seminary.

In April of 1966 I was invited to New Mexico Highlands University in Las Vegas for an interview. I rented a car in Albuquerque and drove to Las Vegas. As I drove over the mountains at Glorieta I couldn't believe that I might someday live in such a beautiful area. I met with President Thomas Donnelly and the Graduate Committee and before I left

I signed a contract to become the graduate Dean at Highlands. I returned to New York; we packed and hired a moving company to take our things to Las Vegas. The moving company sent our bill to Las Vegas, Nevada, but fortunately our goods arrived in Las Vegas, New Mexico.

Susan and Tom settled into the public school at Las Vegas. We joined the First Presbyterian Church and made a good many friends there. The University was very good, but quite a bit different from the schools in New York. I really enjoyed working at Highlands.

I also served a term as academic dean, but at heart I have always been a teacher, rather than an administrator. So, I asked to be assigned to

the biology department so I could teach full time. During my years in the administration I had always taught at least one class per year. I became chairman of the biology department, and those were very good years.

But in 1979 Muriel was diagnosed as having breast cancer. She underwent a radical mastectomy, was put on drugs, and did well until 1990, when she died. On the day of her death she was surrounded by her family and she went peacefully. I was very upset, obviously, and I suffered quite a lot.

I became a member of the Las Vegas Rotary Club 1311 in the early 1970s, and was a member of the board of directors in 1978 and 1979. I became vice president in 1979 and 1980 and president in 1980 and 1981. I had an interest in the Rotary Exchange Student program and Mary Kay Root of Las Vegas spent a year in New Zealand as a Rotary Exchange Student. While in New Zealand Mary Kay was selected as one of the student leaders and received several honors for her achievements. Upon her return to Las Vegas she gave the club a vibrant and colorful talk on the customs and personalities of her fellow students in New Zealand. As president, I presented her with a certificate of appreciation.

A short time later I met a young man, Fred Salas, who was interested in travel. Muriel had operated a travel agency in Las Vegas, the Alpine Travel, and I had become interested in travel. Fred was also interested in travel so we went together to Europe for several months and on several other trips. I eventually sold our house on Old National Road. My life since then has been good in some respects, but very lonely without Muriel. I was diagnosed as having kidney failure and I am undergoing dialysis three times a week. I find this very debilitating. In May 1997, I moved to Albuquerque to live with Susan and her family.

A list of Merritt's participation in First Presbyterian Church activities:

|        |               |                             |
|--------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| 1971   | Elder         | Class of 1975               |
| 1974   | Member        | Nominating Committee        |
| 1975   | Deacon        | Class of 1979               |
| 1979   | Chairman      | I & S Committee             |
| 1979   | Elder         | Class of 1981               |
| 1989   | Elder         | Class of 1991               |
| 1990   | Pulpit Supply |                             |
| 1991   | Elder         | Class of 1994               |
| 1991-2 | Chairman      | Peacemaking Committee       |
| 1992   | Member        | Worship and Music Committee |
| 1992   | Pulpit Supply |                             |
| 1992   | Member        | Nominating Committee        |
| 1994   | Pulpit Supply |                             |

Merritt died on August 1, 1998.

Merritt McGahan and J. A. Schufle 1997



## MURIEL MCGAHAN

In 1978 Muriel opened her own travel agency that she called the Alpine Travel Center. In 1979 she was diagnosed with breast cancer. When she was hospitalized for surgery, she was sitting up in bed making travel arrangements for her clients. Her daughter Susan came to work with her in March 1979 and they operated the Alpine Travel together until Muriel retired in 1985.

After retirement Muriel spent many hours researching and compiling family histories of both her family and Merritt's. She died peacefully at her home on Old National Road on 22 July 1990, surrounded by her family.

A list of Muriel's participation in First Presbyterian Church activities:

|                  |                                 |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1975 Elder       | Class of 1977                   |
| 1976-7 Trustee   |                                 |
| 1975-7 Treasurer | General Fund                    |
| 1975 Member      | Budget Committee                |
| 1976 Member      | Council on Women and the Church |
| 1977 Member      | Nominating Committee            |

Susan McGahan Thatcher and J. A. Schufle

# 5

## SOME 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY MINISTERS

Reverend Roderick Colin Jackson interspersed his sermons with the most interesting and witty stories. His Sunday evening lectures were often given to a church packed to standing room only. He was very interested in young people and often had twenty to twenty-five high school youths in his Sunday School class. This recollection of Rev. Jackson was told by Mrs. Evelyn Irish who was the first woman in our church to be elected as an elder.

Rev. Calvin Schmitt's first church was the Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas. He moved on to an extraordinary and broad lifetime of work for Christianity. He accepted appointments to educational work in Latin America. From 1949 to 1980 he was librarian at the McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago.

Rev. Robert Plagge accomplished so much in his short lifetime. The list of what he did would look like a list of things done by several energetic young people.

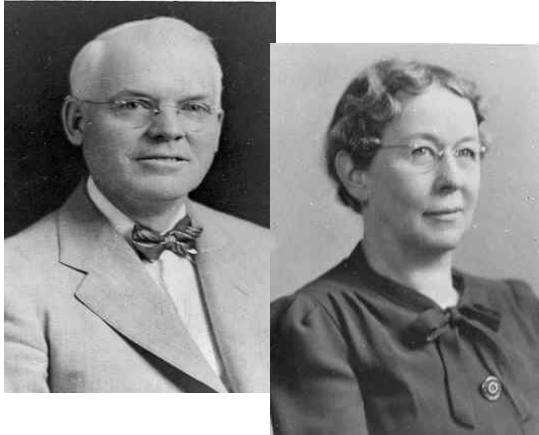
Rev. Al Juterbock was called to Las Vegas because he had experience in working with alcoholics—a program that was started during the administration of Rev. Plagge. Al joined this church in 1969 and he administered eighteen different projects. He spoke of his task as being one-half being a pastor and one-half being a social worker for Christ.

The population of Las Vegas is approximately 80 percent Spanish speaking. When we were doing the pastor search and selected Rev. Don Wales we included in our qualifications a pastor who spoke Spanish.

All of our sermons are in English, but we demonstrate in other ways that we live in a bilingual community.

## REVEREND RODERICK COLIN JACKSON

***Roderick Jackson fought in two wars and was wounded in both. He later had TB, yet he lived to age 90. He was renowned for his outstanding sermons.***



*The young student pastor must have made a favorable impression that Sunday in 1908 when, having sought out the dry Southwest to treat what was thought to be tuberculosis, he preached from the pulpit of the First Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas for the first time. It was not to be his last. Eleven years later, while recuperating in a London hospital from a wound suffered in France during World War I, Rev. Roderick Colin Jackson would be invited by the congregation in Las Vegas to serve as their called pastor. (Evangeline Jackson 1990)*

*Roderick Colin Jackson was born on 24 June 1881 in Napa, California, the son of John Bruce Jackson and Annie MacLennan. Annie MacLennan had come to California to keep house for a relative. Nova Scotian women often did this. Here she had met and married John Bruce Jackson, a veteran of the Civil War. They had two girls and a boy, Roderick Colin being the youngest.*

*Both parents eventually developed tuberculosis. It was for this reason that Annie Jackson wanted to get her children back to her people in Nova Scotia. Her husband had been one of twelve boys, so Annie had no "women folk" on the West Coast. She sent the two girls on ahead with relatives, then she and her young son followed. (E. Jackson 1989)*

Rev. Jackson's daughter, Evangeline, remembers her father's recounting that journey:

*He was four years old when they made the trip to Canada. In later years he recalled details of the long ride from San Francisco to Halifax--the frequent stops to take on water and coal, where the women could sometimes buy bread, milk or tea. They could heat water for tea, or milk for the babies on the pot-bellied stove at the end of the coach with its hard, wooden seats. There was no Pullman or Fred Harvey then.*

*Young Colin (he was always called Colin in Canada) grew up on a rocky little farm near Roger's Hill Center in Pictou County, Nova Scotia, with his mother, one of his two older sisters, and his mother's brother's family. He called his uncle "Papa" (since he scarcely remembered his own father) and his uncle's wife he called "Aunt Katie." This really confused visitors who came to their home... His mother died of tuberculosis when he was nine. He had practically no recollection of his father, though he remembered sitting on the knee of a bearded man he later assumed must have been his father)*

*He attended a country school and later Pictou Academy in Pictou, the county seat several miles away. While there he received his first military*

**Roderick & Lily Jackson**

*training--similar to R.O.T.C. When he finished at the academy, the Boer War had begun in South Africa and he enlisted. He was slightly underage, but they badly needed men with any military training at all, and he was accepted. (Jackson 1989)*

*He served in South Africa as a gunner in E. Battery of the Royal Canadian Field Artillery, Second Canadian Contingent, and was wounded on 30 May 1900. (An interesting highlight of his time in the service was his having witnessed the coronation celebration of King Edward VII in 1902 as a member of the Canadian Coronation Contingent.) (Schwarz 1941-42, 580)*

*In the same year the unpopular Boer War was officially ended.*

*On his return from South Africa, he went to Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, for by this time he knew that he wanted to be a minister. He was an undergraduate student from 1903-06. He then studied at Queen's Theological School from 1906-1909 except for going to Yale Divinity School for his middle year in seminary. However, his study there was interrupted when he went home to Nova Scotia for the Christmas vacation. While walking in the woods with his fiancée Lily Young's cousin who was a medical doctor, he coughed and spit blood on the snow. The doctor told him to get to a doctor as soon as he got back to Yale for he probably had tuberculosis.*

*Thus began the process that resulted in his going to the dry Southwest climate as assistant to Rev. Norman Skinner at the First Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas. He recalled that a "lunger," as a person with tuberculosis was called, was not always given a friendly welcome, but he referred to his experience with Rev. Skinner as a very valuable, helpful association for a young student minister.*

*Later he worked in small communities along the railroad in the Canadian Rockies where he had a pass and rode with the railroad workers. He also worked one summer in the wheat-growing farmlands of Saskatchewan.*

*Although he was ordained by the Canadian Presbyterian Church on 29 April 1909, he never served a church in Canada but returned to the good climate of New Mexico, having received a call from the First Presbyterian Church of Farmington. His means of transportation while there was his horse. He sometimes rode with two or three friends up to the Four Corners country and on to Mesa Verde and Durango, Colorado.*

*Photography was one of his hobbies also and he developed his own pictures while serving in Farmington. He left Farmington in 1914 to attend Union Theological Seminary in New York City where he received the Bachelor of Divinity degree. One of his professors there was Harry Emerson Fosdick, who served Rockefeller Memorial Church on Riverside Drive and was a well-known radio preacher for many years.*

*Upon receipt of his degree, Colin returned to Nova Scotia and there, on his birthday, 24 June 1915, he and Lily Young were married...Colin enlisted in the 85th Battalion of the Nova Scotia Highlanders and sailed to France where he served on active duty as an infantry officer until the end of the war. By Armistice Day, 11 November 1918, Major Jackson was second in command to Colonel Ralston, who during World War II was Defense Minister in the Canadian government. The two men were longtime friends.*

*On one occasion, in the absence of both the commander and the chaplain, Major Jackson was ordered to prepare the battalion for review by the Prince of Wales (later to be crowned King George V) and to conduct the Sunday service of worship. Perhaps because this experience was often recounted, many people held the false impression that Jackson had once served as chaplain in the Canadian Army.*

*Wounded on 10 August 1918, and awarded the Military Cross and Bar, he ended his military career in 1919 with the rank of Major, as had his grandfather at the close of the Civil War. It was while he was a patient in a military hospital in London that he received his call to the First Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas. (E. Jackson 1989)*

The Las Vegas church was forced to close from October to December of 1918 due to the influenza epidemic then raging across the country.

On 16 February 1919 a call was extended by congregational action to Rev. Roderick C. Jackson at a salary of \$1800 per year. He assumed his position in the pulpit on 6 July 1919. The congregational roll stood at 150 members. He and his wife Lily lived for a time on Sixth Street. A note in the Session records of 29 March 1920, says, "After some discussion in regard to purchasing lots on which to build the pastor's manse, motion was made and carried that a committee of three be appointed to confer with Mr. Jackson in regard to the same."

On 15 February 1922 daughter Evangeline Ida (Vannie) was born to them in a two-story house at 922 Eighth Street. She has pictures taken of herself in front of that house at a time when she was able to stand alone. She remembers the attractive stucco bungalow built soon after by the church at 1232 Seventh Street. The manse had become a reality, probably by early 1923.

The ladies of the church organized themselves into a group called the King's Daughters during Mr. Jackson's pastorate.

Louella Hays' recollection of him was recorded in *Preparing the Way*:

*He was a great reader. He used many illustrations in his sermons taken from one of his favorite books, "The Rise and Fall of the Dutch Republic" by John Lothrop Motley. Though a former military man, he preached more sermons on peace than any minister we'd ever had. . . Mr. Jackson was a humorous man with a very pleasing way about him. He would look at you, sometimes over the top of his horn-rimmed glasses, and give you a piece of his mind, but all the time smiling at you and keeping you on his side. One of his quotations, used with regard to the use of bad language, was, "If you want to make a cesspool of your lips, please don't use my ears for a sewer." Mr. Jackson was a high-tempered man and would occasionally flare up in church and bawl out the congregation. When he did, Mrs. Jackson, by nature shy and retiring, would go home with big tears in her eyes. (Schufle 1970, 64)*

Evelyn Irish recalls that Jackson interspersed his sermons with the most interesting and witty stories. His Sunday evening lectures were often given to a church packed to standing room only. He was very interested in young people and often had twenty to twenty-five high school youths in his Sunday school class.

He was so popular a speaker that many people came from other churches to hear him. Dr. Paul Henry recalled that once when visiting in New Orleans he met a man who asked him where he was from. When Paul told him, the man replied that he had been in Las Vegas and there were two things he remembered about the town: there were more dogs there than in any other town he had visited, and he had heard a sermon by Rev. Jackson--the best sermon he had ever heard in his life!

Rev. Jackson, along with Dr. Franklin H. Crail and Herman Ilfeld, formed an organizing committee of three that gave birth to the Rotary Club of Las Vegas in 1919. Roderick (as he was known to his Rotary friends) served as the club's first secretary. Dr. Crail was his close friend. The two spent many evenings together playing chess. They once drove west to California where Jackson saw his grandfather and some uncles.

*Rev. Jackson submitted his resignation as pastor of the church on 20 August 1926 to accept a call to the Westminster Presbyterian Church of Chehalis, Washington, near his sister and family in Aberdeen. The minutes of Session contain the following words: "We take this means of expressing to Mr. Jackson and his family our sincere appreciation of the earnest, courageous and brilliant services which he has rendered to us and to the community during his pastorate here and we commend him to the sister church to which he goes as a wide awake, scholarly, Christian gentleman who has the courage of his convictions and will always be found fearlessly battling for the right as he sees it." (Schufle 1970, 65-66)*

Although Rev. Jackson had first joined the church family as assistant to Rev. Skinner for a brief period in 1908, his association there actually lasted for nearly twenty years. During his pastorate, the church had celebrated its golden anniversary on 21 March 1920.

Rev. Jackson spent two years in Chehalis, Washington, then accepted for health reasons a call to the congregation in Trinidad, Colorado, where he remained another two years. While there, the First Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas invited him back to help celebrate yet another milestone, their sixtieth anniversary. According to the *Las Vegas Daily Optic* of 20 March 1930 he chose as his topic "Worthwhile Wisdom:"

*The text of his Sunday address was taken from the twelfth verse of Psalm 90: So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Life means more than merely feeding and clothing the body, he said. If it meant only that, it would mean very little. It is the spiritual, not the physical life that*

*counts. Work should be carried on for the joy of accomplishing a well done task..." (Schufle 1970, 68)*

Upon leaving his pulpit in Trinidad, he accepted a pastorate at the First Presbyterian Church of Winfield, Kansas. This was to be an association of eighteen years. Highlights from those years were his earning an honorary doctor of divinity degree from Southwestern College in 1933, the first non-Methodist to be so honored, and the family's visit to the Holy Land as part of a Mediterranean cruise in 1934.

His next assignment was as assistant to Dr. Charles Shedd in Ponca City, Oklahoma, a post he held for about six years. While there, he had occasion to vividly recall his fascination with the engine that had pulled the train so long ago on his boyhood journey from California to Halifax. Daughter Evangeline spotted an old Santa Fe engine that had been brought in for a Cherokee Strip celebration. Vannie says, "Dad was so excited about it he phoned a local reporter he knew and told her of his long trip when he was four." The reporter didn't have a photographer available, so she asked if Vannie could take his picture by the train—which she did. It was in the next day's Sunday paper with her write-up. When the responsible agent heard the story, the family was able to board the train even though it had been closed up for its return to Kansas. Sure enough, at the end of the coach was a pot-bellied iron stove.

After serving in Ponca City, he and Lily went to Las Cruces, New Mexico, where for six months he assisted the minister at First Presbyterian, who was recovering from illness. Before leaving there, he was asked by the First Presbyterian Church of Farmington to come as their interim pastor. Thus he had come full circle in his ministry; his first parish was also his last.

When the couple returned to their Ponca City home, he taught the Men's Bible class, having an average of sixty to seventy in attendance. Vannie recalls, "Some of the women who heard about his teaching didn't like it that they couldn't sit in. Very rarely, when a couples' class teacher was absent, that class joined with Dad's class, and the women had their chance."

After Lily's death on 8 January 1961, Roderick and his daughter moved to Stillwater, Oklahoma, as Vannie's job as district child welfare supervisor was there. Roderick died of a stroke on 6 June 1972--just eighteen days short of his ninety-first birthday. He died in Stillwater Nursing Home adjacent to his home.

Vannie remembers that her dad's final act of ministry had been to baptize an infant girl at the First Presbyterian Church in Stillwater. He had married the baby's parents while living in Ponca City. The groom had been in the Marines at the time and wore full dress

uniform. The infant girl is now grown and was married on 23 December 1989 in the same church as her parents.

Vannie finishes our narrative: "I recall Dad for many reasons, among them being his avid love of reading. In a sense, he was always a student. His study (never called an "office") was always in the manse rather than at church, so I was aware of the amount of time he spent on sermon preparation. He also spent much time in visiting the sick, shut-ins and elderly. I have always counted myself fortunate to have been a "daughter of the manse," a Presbyterian "P.K" (preacher's kid). I was blessed with two wonderful Christian parents!"

Evangeline Jackson, Ruth Hazelton, and Dale B. Gerdeman 1989



## REV. HOMER F. TEGLER

*The Board of National Missions had three day-schools and two hospitals in the mountainous area of northern New Mexico, which were managed by three teachers and a nurse. Up until this time, my wife and I had no experience with the programs of the Board of National Missions, and we immediately became interested. These fine young women were very devoted to their work. We and the church members found many ways to be of assistance. They were welcomed in our homes, and occasionally we were able to go up to the schools and hospital to help them. (Rev. Homer F. Tegler)*



Homer F. Tegler was born in Marshall, Missouri, on 4 December 1903. He received his public-school education in Marshall. Harry C. Gibbs, a public school and Sunday school classmate of Dale B. Gerdeman, said that his mother knew Homer during their school years, and that he had played football. In 1926 Tegler graduated from the Missouri Valley College in Marshall. He graduated from Louisville Seminary in 1929.

The same year, he married Gertrude Stevenson. Trinity University in San Antonio awarded him the honorary D. D. degree in 1943.

Gertrude Tegler remembers her husband's first pastorate was at the First Presbyterian Church in Richmond, Missouri. Both daughters, Eleanor and Nancy, were born in Richmond.

Rev. Tegler received a call to the First Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas, New Mexico, in February 1936. Gertrude recalls:

### **Rev. Homer & Gertrude**

It was quite a change for us to come from the Middle West to Las Vegas, where we had mountains so close. The families in the church welcomed us; we soon made the adjustment, and our new work began. Homer set to work vigorously in Las Vegas, reporting to the Session on 1 July 1936, that he "had made over forty calls upon summer students at the Normal and felt very encouraged over the prospects for the summer attendance." He joined with other members of the Ministerial Alliance in promoting an eight-day Union Preaching Mission, 15-22 November 1936, held at the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was active in the Ministerial Alliance in Las Vegas. This group promoted a Union Morning Worship Service held in Ilfeld Auditorium at 11 a.m. on

28 January 1940. Dr. Sam Higginbottom, Moderator of the First Presbyterian Church USA, preached the sermon, and Tegler and other local ministers took part in the service.

On one of our trips we visited the Cleveland, New Mexico "community hospital." It was in a small, poorly built house. When we went inside, we saw two nurses and the supervisor canning peaches. Around the large kitchen range were four orange crates, with a tiny baby in each one. Their mothers were on cots. The workers were doing their best to care for the patients, in spite of inadequate facilities. While Homer was Moderator of the Synod, a new hospital was built at Embudo, to serve a vast area of the mountain people. He was very proud of the new building and had a part in its dedication. Dr. Sarah Bowen was the superintendent.

We made many lovely friends in Las Vegas, including the Coxes, the Millers, the Funks, the Gerdemans, the Roberts and others. The Comstocks adopted us and kept the girls in ice cream. One of the men from the mountainous area took Homer on fishing and hunting trips. This was a delight to him, and they became good friends. In Las Vegas Homer grew more and more involved and soon became Moderator of the Presbytery and, later, Moderator of the Synod. He took a deep interest in the National Mission work and at every opportunity responded to its needs. The community projects and civic clubs were of great interest to Homer. He was on the Assembly Board of Missions for nine years before he retired. He made many interesting contacts with members of the Assembly.

In 1941 we had a call to Waxahachie, Texas, and were there for seven years, with two years out to be a navy chaplain during the War. In 1947 we were called to the First Presbyterian Church in Roswell, New Mexico. We were there for 19 years until our retirement in 1966. Then the Board of Pensions asked us to go to Lakeland, Florida, to manage the Presbyterian Retirement Area for missionaries and ministers.

On 5 August 1975 Homer passed away. I am continuing to live in the retirement area in Lakeland, where I have many friends and can have care when it is needed.

In 1969 Rev. F. Homer Tegler wrote a letter to J. A. Schufle that is duplicated here:

*Our days in Las Vegas were delightful ones, spent in the altitude of the city and the mountains behind. We learned to love the mountains and the people. As this was only our second church out of seminary I am sure we made many mistakes, which we now regret and would attack differently if we had to face them again. Most of all I think we enjoyed the freedom from tradition which often holds a church from making progress.*

*While in Las Vegas we too had to learn a new church organization, as we had been brought up in the U. S. (Southern) Presbyterian Church. The National Missions program was so near to us in Las Vegas and so many of the congregation were not even aware of what the church was attempting to do in the mountains with the Spanish people. Even our first Presbyterian meeting was bilingual. But in time a better road north made access to the Mora Valley more pleasant and through visitations with the Plaza schools our people began to see their opportunities for service beyond their own front door.*

*Poor health caused my resignation from the Roswell Church, which we had planned on serving until we were 65 years of age. The Board of Pensions later in 1966 invited us to replace their superintendents at the Mobile Home Recuperative property in St. Petersburg, Florida. We made a trip down to see it and decided we would attempt it. However, the Board in the meantime had decided to sell their ten mobile homes there and erect six apartments in Lakeland where they needed a supervisor. So in the middle of September 1966 we moved from St. Pete to Lakeland.*

*Since coming here the Board asked us if we felt we could look after their 18 houses, six apartments and the three duplexes they built last summer. So while we are not ministering in the pulpit, we feel that we are doing a work for the church and we are grateful for the opportunity.*

*Both of our daughters started to school in Las Vegas and this marked quite a change in our family. (Schufle 1970 71-72)*

*Cordially yours,*

*F. Homer Tegler*

Gertrude Tegler and Dale B. Gerdeman 1987

## REVEREND CALVIN HENRY SCHMITT

*We at McCormick . . . have had the blessing of Calvin Schmitt's ongoing presence, not only as a theological educator but also as a charming and gracious friend and colleague. He and Alice Muir Schmitt have been a husband/wife presence that has contributed immeasurably to the concord of our seminary's life together. (Stotts)*

Calvin Henry Schmitt was born in Ellsworth, Minnesota, in 1913, the son of Rev. Henry Adam Schmitt and Mary Greenfield Schmitt. Henry Adam Schmitt was pastor of the Ellsworth Presbyterian Church, and the son of Rev. Henry Schmitt, D.D., pioneer German Presbyterian minister in Iowa.



**Rev. Calvin & Alice Schmitt**

Calvin spent his boyhood in rural parishes in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois. He graduated with a bachelor's degree from the University of Dubuque in Iowa. He then did graduate work in psychology at the University of New Mexico.

In 1935 he enlisted in the army and did intelligence work on the United States-Mexican border with the U.S. Cavalry in Fort Bliss, Texas. In 1938 he became a student at the McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago. During his last year at the seminary he received a call to become pastor, upon graduation, of the First Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas, New Mexico. He graduated with a B.D. degree. The title of his thesis was, "The Last Days of the Kingdom of Judah." He occupied the pulpit in Las Vegas for the first time on 1 June 1941.

Calvin Schmitt was a single man when he first came to Las Vegas, but he left for Chicago that same summer to be married. He married Alice Muir, the daughter of Rev. James Blakely Muir of Seattle, Washington. He brought his bride back with him to a newly redecorated manse on Seventh Street. They were the parents of David Muir Schmitt, born in 1946, and Janet Schmitt, born in 1954.

Rev. Schmitt initiated a church bulletin, "The Church Chimes," to carry news to all members of the congregation and gave renewed energy to the program for the younger members of the fellowship. The Session even approved dancing at social gatherings sponsored by the church since, "There seemed to be agreement that it would be much more of a wholesome situation so supervised than to allow our young people to seek their own entertainment entirely by themselves."

However, the Session did not expect to get off scot-free on this break with the puritanical past because it added: "If objection was raised, then would be the time to deal with the problem of dancing." A young people's organization was formed, went caroling on Christmas Eve, had an outing at El Porvenir, and accompanied Rev. Schmitt to Levy, New Mexico, where they took part in a worship service.

A series of forum lectures on Wednesday evenings was held in the church at the instigation of Rev. Schmitt in the summer of 1942. He was interested in the dissemination of the Word by radio, and in the fall of 1942, the Session authorized broadcasting the regular Sunday morning church services. This continued until at least April 1944. It was reported that, "The broadcast of sermons is well-received and we have high commendation on the pastor's sermons from the radio audience." Mr. Schmitt recalls that it was Owen H. Shillinglaw who sponsored the radio broadcasts.

In March 1944 Rev. Schmitt announced his desire to resign from the pastorate "In order that he and Mrs. Schmitt might accept appointments to educational work in Latin America under the Board of Foreign Missions of the Church." At the annual meeting on 30 March 1944 the congregation regretfully acceded to the pastor's request.

From 1944 until 1948, Rev. Schmitt was director of Colegio Americano in Caracas, Venezuela. In 1948 and 1949, he was a graduate student in the Union Theological Seminary in New York, studying the Old Testament, and later at Columbia University, studying library science.

From 1949 until 1980, he was librarian at the McCormick Theological Seminary on the south side of Chicago, Illinois. During these years he was involved in many other seminary and church activities there including:

1949-1961 Instructor in Hebrew  
1957 Professor of Bibliography  
1957-1958 President, American Theological Library Association--  
1959-1979 Chairperson, Periodical Indexing Board, American  
1959-1979 Theological Library Association  
1961-1966 Secretary, Library Development Program, American  
Theological Library Association  
1962 Published Self-Appraisal Guide (New Haven); ATLA Library  
Development Program  
1965 Consultant to theological seminary libraries, Buenos Aires,  
Argentina, and Montevideo, Uruguay, for the Fund for Theological  
Education  
1969 Received Doctor of Literature degree, Alma College  
1966-1973 Member, Board of National Missions, United Presbyterian  
Church in the U.S.A.  
1969-1970 Chairperson, Chicago Area Theological Library Association

1969-1973 Member of the Executive Committee  
1970 Chairperson, Committee of Reorganization of Seminary Governance, McCormick Theological Seminary  
1970, 75, 83 Member, Presidential Search Committee, McCormick Theological Seminary  
1973-1976 Member, Program Agency, United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.  
1974 Liaison with rural village missions in Columbia on behalf of United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.  
1975-1980 General Director, the Jesuit-Krauss-McCormick Library, Chicago  
1980 Archivist and Director of Placement, McCormick Theological Seminary  
1986 Volunteer Archivist, McCormick Theological Seminary

Excerpts from a manuscript by Jack L. Stotts, titled *Calvin H. Schmitt: A McCormick Appreciation* read:

*...As McCormick Theological Seminary's respected Professor of Bibliography and Librarian for over thirty years, Calvin Schmitt has persistently stimulated his colleagues and students to reflect with him on the fundamental purposes and goals of education for the Church's ministry. A theological library was... simultaneously an educational expression and a servant of such an encompassing perspective...*

*It has been one of Calvin Schmitt's great gifts to McCormick that he has helped the Seminary ground its life and work on firm theological and educational principles...His genius for melding theory and practice made him a superb librarian. It also propelled him into the heart of almost every major institutional activity at McCormick. The myriad committees to which he was assigned and called by fellow faculty, administrators and the Seminary's Board of Directors were and are a function of that wisdom.*

*As a librarian, Calvin Schmitt has always been a professor. He has been a teacher, concerned that the library building, the library collection, and library service enable and stimulate learning. Under his tutelage, the library itself became an educational resource, supporting fundamental faculty research and enticing both willing and unwilling students to go farther than they had thought either possible or necessary. The library reflected its leader, unobtrusively but persistently expanding insights and stimulating root thought and pertinent application of knowledge.*

*As a theological educator, Calvin Schmitt was challenged by a generous vision of the Church. As a result, he challenged McCormick to open itself to the internationalizing of theological education...His own earlier mission engagement in South America aided the Seminary in its struggle to equip Hispanic Americans for a more effective partnership in ministry. And McCormick's International Program and Latino Studies Program bear the mark of his commitment and dedication. They testify to his breadth of concerns.*

*Following McCormick's decision in the 1950s to rebuild (its library) on its then current site, he presided with characteristic thoroughness over the planning*

*and construction of a superb library building. It was a showcase facility, applauded by architects and librarians, faculty and students... He gave firm, if reluctant, support in the 1970s to McCormick's leaving its comfortable home to take up residence...on the south side of Chicago...*

*As part of McCormick's relocation, a new title-General Director of the Jesuit, Lutheran and McCormick Libraries--supplemented Cal Schmitt's assignment as McCormick librarian.*

*Open-heart surgery in the midst of the relocation process barely slowed down his arduous work of integrating three important collections into one library and three fine staffs into one team...*

*Because of Calvin Schmitt's work as a theological librarian, many know about McCormick Seminary. His own contributions beyond McCormick have cast a favorable light upon the Seminary...*

*Their dignity, humor, and thoughtfulness toward colleagues, staff, and students have elicited deep and abiding affection.*

Calvin Schmitt died in St. Paul, Minnesota, on October 6, 1992.

Alice Muir Schmitt died in St. Paul, Minnesota, on April 28, 1999.

Dale B. Gerdeman 1987, Jack L. Stotts, *Calvin H. Schmitt: A McCormick Appreciation*

## REVEREND JOHN GEORGE MANCINI

***John George Mancini served the First Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas from 1953 until 1956. He summed up his years in the ministry as, "It was a long, sometimes hard road, but I enjoyed the journey all the way."***

John George Mancini was born 29 October 1917 to George and Rose Mancini in Pittston, Pennsylvania. He graduated from Pittston High School in 1935 and attended Bloomfield College in New Jersey for two years where he studied organ and piano with Dr. Roberta Bitgood. He then served in the United States Air Force for three and a half years, including a tour of duty in the Southwest Pacific during World War II.



Harrison of Center, Texas, and returned to college at Upsala College, East Orange, New Jersey, where he graduated in 1947 with a Bachelor of Arts degree. In 1951 he graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary with a Bachelor of Divinity degree and subsequently received a master of divinity degree in 1970.

While serving Church in Locktown, New Jersey, he was ordained to the Gospel Ministry in the United Presbyterian Church, USA, on 26 June 1951 by the Presbytery of Lehigh, Synod of Pennsylvania.

### **Rev. John George**

In the succeeding years, he held pastorates in these churches:

1951-1953 First Presbyterian Church, Summit Hill, Pennsylvania  
1953-1956 First Presbyterian Church, Las Vegas, New Mexico  
1956-1962 First Presbyterian Church, Poplar Bluff, Missouri  
1962-1966 Rock Hill Presbyterian Church, St. Louis, Missouri  
1966-1972 First Presbyterian Church, Cedar Hill, Missouri Yoked Ministry:  
1972-1980 New Rehoboth-Greenville Church, Clarion, Pennsylvania, and  
1972-1980 Pisgah Presbyterian Church, Corsica, Pennsylvania

John was then retired by the Presbytery of Kiskimene on 1 November 1980.



J. A. Schufle writes, "Christine Mancini, the pastor's wife, was very popular with the congregation and she helped in every department of the church, the Sunday School, where she taught the Junior High Class, young people's work where she was advisor to the Senior Westminster Fellowship, and women's work. She was an attractive woman who complemented her husband in every way, so that the two of them were a model of the pastor and his wife. Mr. Mancini was reputed to be a fine musician but could seldom be prevailed upon to perform. He instituted a program of examinations for Sunday school teachers that was something less than popular with the teachers. Mr. Mancini was very active in making pastoral calls. He reported 362 calls made during the first ten months of his pastorate, an average of 36 per month, or about 9 per week. He was meticulous in keeping the church records and reported all his activities in the yearly annual reports."

A Men's Club in the church was formed in the fall of 1954. Robert Potts, Owen Shillinglaw and Otis Stone were active in the organization. The first officers elected were Calvin Baker, president; Claude Hays, vice-president; and Fred Rawlins, secretary-treasurer. In June 1955, the Men's Club erected the Bulletin Board standing in the front of our Church.

The Board of Deacons was also very active at this time under the leadership of president Carter Forbes and secretary Kennard Crimmin, providing groceries for needy families and also carrying some of the functions of the Board of Trustees such as proposing the installation of a sprinkling system in the church lawn, and the purchase of hearing aids for the church sanctuary.

During the vacation of Mr. Mancini in the month of July, 1955, the congregation of the Spanish Presbyterian Church in West Las Vegas and the First Presbyterian Church of East Las Vegas worshipped together. For two Sundays they met in the West church and for the other two Sundays in the East church. This was the beginning of close cooperation between the congregations which was to result five years later in their complete merger."

J. A. Schufle, *Preparing the Way* 1970

The Mancinis had two daughters, Christine (Tina), now Mrs. Van Scott of Hudson, Ohio, and Deborah Lee, now Mrs. Leo Reber of Ellington, Missouri.

One of the outstanding events of his ministry in Las Vegas took place in 1954, when he served as chaplain for the Westminster Fellowship group from New Mexico attending the national meeting at the University of Illinois. Several young people went from the Las Vegas church, and the family also made the trip. Mrs. Janet McCurdy and Mrs. Carter Forbes made sure the three Mancinis had proper New Mexico "Indian dresses" to wear while at the meeting.

John was an avid fisherman and enjoyed collecting stamps, old coins, old Bibles and hymnbooks, as well as his music. After an 18-month battle with cancer, he died on 28 October 1985 one day short of his 68th birthday.

Christine Mancini 1987

## REVEREND ROBERT "BOB" AND GRETCHEN PLAGGE

***Robert "Bob" Plagge served the First Presbyterian Church from December 1963 until 1969. He led a short but dynamic life full of compassion for others. Gretchen was his strong and talented helper.***

Among Bob's most memorable traits was his ability to laugh and to make others laugh. He had a child-like freedom to "let his hair down," a warm sense of humor and a sharp wit. Son Curtis said, "I don't



remember but one or two times in the time I knew my father that he wasn't joking, laughing and cutting up." Son Louie spoke of his father's unending sense of humor, which became a valuable tool for living. Son Dennis wrote, "Everybody remembers how he always had this broad beaming smile and his laugh...You always knew he was around when you heard his laugh." Daughter

Karan spoke of it as awesome. Jay Schufle recalls his explosive laugh that would shake the rafters.

**Gretchen Plagge (Bush) & Rev. Robert Plagge**  
This delightful side of Bob's personality was evident when he was less than three years old. His older brother Jim recalls that before supper one evening their father called to their mother, "Alma, Jim and I are going around the block." Bob heard this and came toddling into their midst, a child's building block in his hand. With deliberation, he set it on the kitchen floor and, laughing heartily, he ran around the block a number of times, much to the family's amusement.

Bob was born to Reuben George and Alma Dravis Plagge on 5 October 1921 in Barrington, Illinois. The boys' father was a strong disciplinarian and Jim recalls that the ten years between the boys rather mellowed their father who seemed to be much more relaxed with young Bob, placing fewer restrictions upon him.

There were several pets in Bob's childhood. Sport was the family dog. They acquired a macaw named Mac and at age 13 Bob wrote an autobiography and described it as a school assignment:

*The macaw is a member of the parrot family and is much like a parrot only bigger. Ours which we got in the fall of 1928 is salmon, red, blue, yellow and green, a white face, a large strong bill and tail about three feet long. Mac says phrases such as, "I love you," "Here, Sport," "Well, well, well, how are you?"*

*"Hello, there," "Come here," "Good-bye," and many others. He also whistles. He seems to say them at the right time. (Plagge, Bob 1934)*

Jim recounts a memorable incident:

*Bob took piano lessons. His mother reminded him of a recital and told him to bathe and dress so as to be ready with time to spare. But Bob forgot, and she wasn't able to find him when the time arrived. So she went to the recital without him. Midway through the program, he came crashing through the swinging doors at the back of the church, his face dirty, his hair disheveled, and his clothes untidy. He was out of breath, having run as fast as he could, but he arrived just as his name was called. He pulled up the stool and played his piece accurately and with expression. He even garnered a prize. Bob remained unruffled by his late arrival, shared in the refreshments in a happy mood, and resisted his mother's attempt to take him home for "repairs." (Plagge, Jim 1987)*

As a second or third grader, Bob would play a prank on his older brother who was a senior in high school. Their father bought Jim a second-hand 1926 Packard with a rumble seat. Jim drove the car to and from high school with the top down. Occasionally after school Bob and sometimes a friend or two would get into the rumble seat and close the cover, being careful not to latch it down. They invariably surprised Jim as he drove home. Bob would open the cover and pop up like a jack-in-the-box, yelling and screaming which assured an appreciative audience of students walking and others in passing cars. Bob did well in school--was active and innovative. He got into various scrapes, which he managed to survive, growing wiser in the process.

Not only was he a great prankster, devising schemes and organizing his cohorts to carry through on daring stunts, but he matured into something of a daredevil himself as well. In 1929 Buick built a different-looking car with special features to mark its twenty-fifth anniversary. Bob's father bought one--it was his pride and joy. When Bob came of an age to drive, he put this car through great stress, showing off his ample skills as a driver.

Jim recalls a time Bob invited him to go with him as a passenger with no idea what was in store:

*On a campground, a mile south of Barrington, he would drive this beautiful car through the woods between the trees, demonstrating the maneuverability of the car. The ultimate experience was to move this car, rounding curves, right and left in the thick woods, on the rough grass surface, at thirty miles per hour, going between two particular trees with a clearance of only two inches on each side. I didn't know whether to compliment him, reprimand him or both. There he was, grinning and cool as a cucumber, and I decided to never mention it to our father.*

Bob's neighbor and close friend Dick Watson were ringleaders in many carefully planned escapades. Bob loved to tell one story which Gretchen Plagge Bush, his wife, passes on to us:

*Bob was the leader of a dance band while in high school and needed to have a set of band stands. The barn behind his home had a large loft and the band members built all the bandstands out of material they found in the barn. They were too big to get down out of the loft of the barn. At that time Bob's father was working in Chicago as Cook County Tax Assessor. One day Bob and Dick waited until Mr. Plagge left for work and they immediately started sawing to make a bigger door in the loft. All that was available in those years were hand tools. They took a huge section out of the barn, then removed the band stands and then put the section back so that it was not noticeable that it had been removed.*

Jim thought Bob's boundless energy, his willingness to take risks, and his extreme confidence in his ability to handle things were traits that later contributed to his success as a pastor and counselor.

Gretchen recounts another exploit:

*Because the Plagge family held an interest in the Barrington bank, Bob's father had made up his mind that Bob was to become a banker. This didn't appeal to Bob at all. There were a number of volatile confrontations about this idea between Bob and his father. Bob's answer to this was that he planned to leave home after he finished high school. He was equipping a bicycle for a long road trip including carriers to take camping equipment. He had a radio mounted on it. It became a very elaborate project. Before he left, photographers from the Chicago Tribune came out and took pictures and wrote a story about his plan to go by bicycle to Denver. Bob's strong-willed nature was much like his father's. His parents knew he was going, but thought that he would be home in a short length of time.*

*He left early in the fall and rode his bicycle from Barrington to Ames, Iowa--a distance of about four hundred miles. This trip took him about a week or ten days. He had stopped along the way camping in gas station yards and public facilities. In Ames he stayed with his uncle Herb and aunt Selma Plagge for several days. An early snow hit which halted his plans to go to Denver on the bike, because he had not prepared for winter weather. He took the train for the rest of the trip to Denver, where he got a job and began to work.*

*Living alone for the first time and working at his first full-time job gave him many maturing experiences. After he had been in Denver about six weeks, his father relented about wanting Bob to have a business profession. His parents drove to Denver to get him.*

Bob entered the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana as an engineering student. He did remarkably well, especially impressing Jim with his high grades in math during the freshman year. Hardly was Jim through praising him, however, when Bob announced his decision to change his major to psychology: he wanted to work with people and their problems and thought he might make a good counselor.

Gretchen recalls:

*In Champaign-Urbana he joined the University YMCA. In those years the student YMCA was a very active organization on all college campuses.*

*Bob became a member of the YMCA cabinet and chairman of the recreation programs with as many as sixty-five leaders working under him. Art Hall became a close friend of Bob's. He was a dynamic person and had a profound influence on Bob's life and development. Hall became a Presbyterian minister. His last church was Bethesda, Maryland. He retired in Gaithersburg, Maryland.*

*After Bob had been at the University for two years he went to Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, to a regional student YMCA and YWCA conference. Dr. James R. Hine also attended this conference. Gretchen Young also went to the conference from Iowa State where she was a student. Their romance had a story-book quality. They had a wonderful time at Lake Geneva and Gretchen got well acquainted with Bob's parents as Lake Geneva was only about 45 miles from Barrington. That winter Bob went home with Gretchen to meet her family and developed an extremely close relationship with Gretchen's parents.*

*At the University of Illinois he was in the Enlisted Reserve Training Corps. He was deferred while he was attending college, but was classified as an enlisted man with a rank of PFC. In 1943, the tempo of the war increased. He had completed all of his credits but three hours to get the bachelor's degree before he went into the Army Corps of Engineers in Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. He was promoted to non-commissioned cadre officer and then went to Officer's Candidate School in Fort Belvoir, Virginia.*

*On 22 September 1944 Bob and Gretchen were married. They thought they would have about a year before Bob was shipped overseas. That time shrank to about six weeks and Bob left for Europe.*

*It was a difficult time--the courtship had mostly been carried on by mail during the first period when they were in two different universities. For another two years he was in the service. Gretchen says their love was meant to be, because it survived a lot of stress during those early years.*

Gretchen Young, daughter of Lafe Young and Florence Storms Young, was born 28 January 1923 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, the oldest of three sisters. She attended public schools in Ames, Iowa. Her mother was a talented singer who passed much of her musical interest and talent to her daughter. Gretchen learned to play the organ as a youngster and when she was fifteen she was playing the organ in a funeral home.

While Bob was in Europe Gretchen went back to Iowa State and got her bachelor's degree in food management. She then went to Washington D.C. where she worked for two years in food management until Bob came back from the service.

*Bob did not get back from Europe until June 1946. After the war he was required to remain in Europe for other military duties. Later while waiting for transportation home he realized that few of men he was associating with had anything tangible to go home to--work or a career. This caused anxiety and despair for many of them.*

*At that time he got a letter from Jim Hines asking him if he would be interested in working with him at the McKinley Foundation sponsored by the First Presbyterian Church. This was a life-changing experience for Bob because he realized it was Providence that he had this opportunity. (Bush 1996)*

Bob and Gretchen moved to Champaign-Urbana where he completed his education under the G.I. Bill, receiving his degree from the University of Illinois in 1947. He worked with Jim Hines at the McKinley Foundation sponsored by the First Presbyterian Church for four years. Jim Hines was a young pastor who, along with his wife, was a very influential presence in the lives of Bob and Gretchen.

Bob's brother, Jim, was a professor of anatomy and associated for a number of years with the University of Illinois's College of Medicine. As a member of the admissions committee, he was often in Champaign-Urbana to interview applicants for the medical school. It was then, during evenings spent with Bob and Gretchen at the McKinley Foundation, that the brothers began to relate to one another as adults, for the difference in their ages had put distance between them in earlier years. Jim came to admire and appreciate Robert's qualities, observed how Gretchen's strengths complimented and supported his, and watched as Bob's interest in a career as a pastor took shape.

In 1949 daughter Karan Lee was born. In 1950 Gretchen's father and Bob built a summer home at Ten Mile Lake in northern Minnesota. One of Gretchen's sisters continues to use the summer home. This was one of Bob's early ambitious carpenter projects.

Bob made his decision to enter the ministry and the family moved to Marin County, north of San Francisco. He enrolled at San Francisco Theological Seminary in San Anselmo while that institution was served by its revered president Jesse Baird. Bob graduated with honors in 1953. A first son, Curtis Arthur, was born during those years.

In the spring of 1953, the congregation in Okanogan, Washington, was feeling some discouragement about its future. A National Missions church for most of its forty-nine years, its fifty members had difficulty raising \$3,900 for the pastor's salary. A procession of twenty-three ministers had come and gone after brief stays. The church hadn't had a full-time pastor for nearly two years. The white frame building was outmoded, and the small education unit grossly inadequate. The community was the center of a substantial fruit-growing and cattle-grazing area, with a population that hovered around 2,000 for many years. Still, plenty of folks in the area had no church affiliation or were inactive members of a denomination. What was needed, it was felt, was a full-time pastor with energy and enthusiasm, and Bob Plagge was that man.

Committed to awakening and involving the laity, Bob was called in June of 1953 and moved with Gretchen and the two children to

Okanogan, forty miles from the Canadian border. Here Bob could meet a challenge and pursue his great love for the mountains and the out-of-doors.

*The congregation needed a new education building and fellowship hall. A tentative plan was approved, but the dream was beyond the reach of their resources. With Bob's considerable ability with his hands and his encouragement the congregation decided to furnish some of the labor. Six teams of men, each working an evening, set to the task. Three and a half years later membership in the church had doubled, the budget stood at \$26,000 and a \$40,000 building project was under way. (Presbyterian Life 1956)*

Gretchen's education in food service management became very useful in this ministry. Under her leadership the church group served many meals to the work crew. Gretchen found it a joy to be able to help in this way.

Innovations included a rigorous program of lay evangelism. Trained husband and wife teams called on new residents and parents of new church school pupils. Couples made stewardship visits, so that a third of the congregation received a call every six months, while the remaining two-thirds received letters updating them on how their pledge monies were being invested in the mission of the local and the larger Church. Members evaluated their pledges on a continuing basis rather than yearly.

Enquirers' courses drew prospective members to lecture and discussion Sessions on doctrinal and practical theology--no questions barred and no pressure exerted. In one eight-month period, sixty-eight of 100 attending opted for church membership.

Congregants became involved in worship, serving as greeters and ushers and relieving Bob in the pulpit when he, as chairman of Wenatchee Presbytery's camp and conference committee, was serving as counselor. A volunteer member acted as church manager, freeing Bob for study, calling and counseling. Elders, including those not currently on the Session, met monthly over breakfast for prayer, study, planning and evaluation. Asked about the key to his success, Bob explained, "Careful planning with a broad vision and prayer at every stage."

This progress led to an article that read:

*They tore down one third of the church and sealed up the remaining section of the building. They helped with the excavating, made forms for the concrete foundations, poured the concrete, put up cross beams and arches, and nailed shiplap siding on the beams and roof. By November the building was enclosed so classes could be held inside.*

*In the first six months, sixty-five men had contributed 1600 hours of labor. Incoming money from pledges was just about carrying the cost of materials and*



*of the contracted labor for installing electric wiring, the heating system, plumbing, and part of the roofing. (Presbyterian Life 1956)*

The church gained a building valued at double the cost of \$40,000.

Bob's counseling skills brought referrals from attorneys, judges, policemen and juvenile officers. Persons sought him out for pre-marital or post-marital advice. He established a long-term relationship with many; among these were recovering alcoholics. Many with problems began attending church; members asked no questions and made newcomers feel at home.

Meanwhile, the Plagge family was growing with the birth of sons Robert Louis and Dennis Storms. Gretchen was comfortable leading a devotional, directing the choir, advising the youth or serving as church school superintendent--but she was quick to relinquish her leadership role when a lay member was ready to take the reins.

*Counseling as a profession had not come into its own. Gretchen remembers many times when Bob would get up at 5 A.M. to meet some farmer or rancher who came a considerable distance for Bob to counsel before they started their day's work. She remembers one man who flew his own airplane to see Bob once a week over an extended period of time.*

*Counseling work was very strenuous and it led to a rather critical experience. His hours were long and difficult. Building the church required tremendous effort and he had his regular pastoral duties as well. In 1957 he had an "emotional breakdown" because of fatigue. He was given a three months leave of absence. They went back home to Minnesota and Bob went through a complete workup at the Mayo Clinic to determine if there was a deeper cause for his fatigue syndrome. It turned out the major problem was emotional fatigue. After a very careful self-assessment of his abilities and his limitations, Bob and Gretchen returned to Okanogan, Washington, and this became a turning point in his ministry. He realized that he had his human limitations, like everyone else, and needed to pace himself both emotionally and physically. (Bush 1996)*

The five rewarding years spent in Okanogan came to an end in 1958. Bob received a call to pastor the Bethany Presbyterian Church in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Gretchen became a substitute teacher after their youngest, Dennis, started school. She was often involved with serving large church dinners. In Council Bluffs she directed the church choir and was a member of the community choir. She sang in the Omaha symphony chorus. Bob spent another five productive years before being called on 8 December 1963 to the First Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas, New Mexico.

The congregation in Las Vegas became intimately acquainted with this warm and close family. The children were now fourteen, twelve, nine and seven. The children recognized that Bob's parenting

skills were extraordinary and grew to appreciate their good fortune to have been under his guiding hand.

Curtis recalls an occasion one summer when he was nine or ten and feeling some sense of boredom. Bob provided a couple of old outboard motors and suggested that Curtis disassemble them. Curtis Plagge recalls:

*He got me some tools and I set them out on a big tarp...I must have spent two solid weeks sitting on that tarp...Of course, I learned a tremendous amount.*

Karan, in her remembrances, wrote of an event that left a lasting impression:

*In the sixties the high school seniors would have an "all night party" at graduation time. In years previous to our class's graduation, some of the parties had gotten out of hand...It was only the year before when seven of us had been at a party and got into a car wreck and several of us were injured. (That) took a lot out of us and out of all our parents. Dad had good reason to worry about our planned "all night party" and figured he wouldn't sleep a wink during the night anyway so might as well be up and have some control over what was going on... Our class was a friendly, close-knit group. Joe and Terry Torres offered the use of their mountain cabin for the...party, and they chaperoned, and my parents did, too. They allowed us to have all we wanted to drink and to eat. We brought steaks and fried them outside...*

*Because Dad "threw the party," a lot of parents allowed their kids to attend... about 70...We drank, told jokes, caroused around until about three o'clock when Dad formed a caravan of cars to return to Las Vegas. We stayed close together and only went about 15 miles an hour. Dad kept a close watch and when one car started weaving he stopped and had a passenger in the car take over the driving.*

*Dad never allowed himself to forget how it felt to be out of control with alcohol. He knew how dangerous alcohol is. He watched that we did not get involved with that addiction. Daddy felt that some people have addictive personalities.*

Karan remembers her father's penchant for storytelling and how folks would listen attentively for hour after hour. Physically fit and a good athlete, he enjoyed softball, skiing and horseback riding. Riding together for several hours on a few occasions through the open country around Las Vegas provided the opportunity for Bob and his brother Jim to share thoughts and enjoy one another's company--to get acquainted in a way that hadn't been possible before. Bob was an excellent horseman.

Karan recalls:

*My favorite thing to do when we were kids was to go camping. We would go into the mountains for a week at a time. We did it quite often. One place we especially enjoyed was the Santa Barbara campground. We would hike, ride horseback, and (Dad) would keep everybody entertained with stories and other*

*things to do the whole time. Years later, it is hard for me to get everything lined up to spend a day in the mountains. How he could get it organized for the whole family to go on horses and go for a week at a time, I do not know.*

Dennis recalls with less enthusiasm a trip he took with his parents when the three were camping at Tres Ritos:

*They talked me into going horseback riding with them in the morning one day... said it would only be an hour or two at the most. We ended up getting lost and didn't get back for ten or twelve hours... Every time we thought we were on the right trail we were just getting more and more lost. I was frustrated and my mom, the eternal optimist, was saying things like, "Well, at least it isn't raining." Whereupon it would start raining immediately...When we finally made it back, my dad was so exhausted he went into chills and his whole body was shaking...Mom and I put him in the truck and turned on the heater and put blankets all around him. She made him some shredded wheat and hot milk but he just continued shaking...I guess (from) getting wet and drying out and getting wet again all day up in that high country up until the end of the day.*

Gretchen gave her talents extensively to the Las Vegas church, including her organ playing. She also was in the in Las Vegas Community Chorus and the New Mexico Symphony Chorus. She reentered the field of dietetics and worked for the New Mexico State Hospital from 1965 to 1969. At the same time she continued her education and became a qualified dietician. She spent one year working in the welfare department. It was a significant experience which gave her an insight into the lives and needs of those who are economically and socially deprived.

Karan remembers her dad's "philosophy," which he repeated many times:

*I can remember that "Don't sweat the small stuff" was his response to many of life's situations for four small children. I'm sure when I was a teenager I was concerned my father was too lighthearted. Now that I've been an adult for quite a few years I realize that as one of the standards for my life. You can really get along very well and life goes pretty smoothly if you "Don't sweat the small stuff."*

Dennis elaborates further:

*I admire the way he used to relax and not take things too seriously...He was fully extended in his credit but it did not bother him. He knew the value of credit. He had no false pride. He was not afraid of owing someone anything. A lot of people owed him intangible things.*

Bob provided much of the labor that went into building the family's ranch home called Panavista. The children worked alongside and picked up some confidence and expertise of their own while living

with their parents in a tiny trailer on the site. Dennis, who became a builder, was especially appreciative of his father's skill with his hands.

*One thing I appreciated about my father was the fact that he was a self-taught carpenter and construction man--especially now since that is my trade. I look back on all the things he taught me and rely on things I learned, just little things mostly. I can relate to him when I am building and trying to think of a good way to do something or solve a problem. When I go home and look at the work he did there at the ranch, I can just see what must have gone through his mind when he was building this thing or that. Maybe all men of God fancy themselves as carpenters because Joseph was a carpenter and taught the trade to Jesus. I know Dad loved to build things with his hands.*

Curtis spoke of times when he felt resentment about Bob's patience. He perceived that Bob was frequently taken advantage of by people who wanted a handout, returning again and again to benefit from Bob's generosity:

*We didn't have much money and we never really had extra things, though we had everything we needed. I recall a couple of times going with him late at night to bars where one of the alcoholics he had been working with had slipped off the wagon. The bartender would call him up, knowing the situation. Dad would wake me up and take me along, I suspect for company as much as anything...I was always so proud to be his son and there were times when living up to the image that he projected in the community was extremely difficult for me.*

In 1968 Rev. Alfonso Esquibel and his wife Ada came out of retirement to assist Bob with the growing ministry of outreach. In June of that year, a skit was prepared by the Las Vegas delegation at a meeting of the Synod of New Mexico at Ghost Ranch.

*By way of a report on the Dimensions in Stewardship Commitment (DISC) program, the skit was presented by Bob, with help from Jay Schufle, Cecil Hope, Merritt and Muriel McGahan and Bob's wife, Gretchen. Bob played a hippie with a mop for hair and silly clothes; painted flowers adorned his chest. He carried a huge sausage under his arm and took bites of it every now and then. Bob relished every minute and brought the house down repeatedly with his antics. (Schufle 1970, 85)*

On 28 March 1969 when Dennis was twelve, Bob dropped him off at school and drove the pickup to work at the ranch. Unbeknown to him, a high voltage power line had fallen across the barbed-wire fence at the far end of the pasture. When Bob touched the fence near his ranch house, he died instantly.

At the time of Bob's death, at age 47, he was serving as president of the Las Vegas Kiwanis Club, was moderator of the Presbytery of Santa Fe, and was chairing the Westminster Foundation for the Synod of the Southwest. Plans were underway for the centennial celebration of the First Presbyterian Church. Bob had

shepherded the flock with faithfulness and diligence for five years. He was greatly loved and is sorely missed.

The entire community mourned his passing in a service held in Ilfeld Auditorium in the late afternoon of April 1. Dr. James R. Hine of the Trinity Presbyterian Church and came from Tucson to bring the message. He was assistant-pastor at the time and was teaching sociology at the University of Arizona. He had married Bob and Gretchen in 1944 and had baptized both Karan and Curtis.

After Bob's death in 1969 Gretchen moved to Santa Fe and became associated with the school lunch program in the Department of Education. In 1970 she became state director of the program where she served until 1976, at which time she remarried.

Bob's untimely death was a devastating experience but also strengthened all the family. Within the family it left fatherless four children who carried with them a very strong and devoted image of Bob's influence.

Son Louie paid tribute to his dad with these words:

*I remember Bob Plagge as a generous man of endless wealth...not the monetary wealth we think of, but a wealth of spirit. Maybe it was charisma he had but I never knew him to put himself above another man. I believe this is why he enriched so many lives. No matter how low you might feel, if you felt Bob's presence beside you...not ahead of you pulling or behind you pushing...you had to feel better about yourself. This was Bob Plagge's gift of wealth to so many. I will continue to benefit from this inheritance until the day I join him. This kind of wealth can never be spent, and if Bob or someone like him has touched your life you are probably richer than you think.*

The Plagge family received about one hundred letters of condolence. A few of the thoughts expressed follow:

*Bob was a rare person who demonstrated within himself the attributes of the Christian gentleman who dealt successfully with the adversities of life, but who also gave of himself so largely as to become a legend in his time. (Browning 1969)*

*Bob Plagge was a man who compelled one to respond. He was a man who could inspire the best in any one with whom he worked. He was a man who challenged people with the claims of Christ. He was a man who was unafraid to get his hands dirty. He was a man who worked along side his people, as well as with them. He was a man who gave of himself totally and willingly to his responsibility as Pastor. (Caulkins 1969)*

*Bob was a man of faith, of faith in God and faith in his fellow man. A faith that urged him to the utmost in a total commitment, a complete and total involvement in behalf of both God and man. (Salas 1969)*

*He was a young man of promise; eager, energetic, exuberant, his eyes bright, his mind sparkling with ideas, and his head held high as if he were guided by the stars; impetuous at times, but never haughty; strong willed but humble; and always he loved people, all kinds of people, and the people loved him in return.*

*(He)...crammed into a short time a long lifetime of living and doing. He didn't walk through life, he ran; sometimes almost feverishly, sometimes almost to the detriment of his own health and welfare, but never for selfish gain. He knew he was a servant of the servant Lord, and must make haste, for the day comes when a man can work no more on this earth.*

*...he has given himself as a faithful servant of his Lord and of the people of his community. Not just to the people of his church but to all people. The only qualification was that they had some kind of need that he could meet. And last year, as many of you know, he was awarded the Rural Service Award established by Sargent Shriver, which distinguished him properly as a real servant of the common good. (Hine 1969)*

*He not only felt deeply about people who needed help, but did something about it. He had a great faith and was willing to share it with all. (Mac 1969)*

*Bob was so much more than just a friend. He was the living presence of the Kingdom of God in action. (Mabry 1969)*

*Las Vegas is a better place to live because of Mr. Plagge's... good works. (Gilbert 1969)*

*He has achieved success who has lived well, laughed often and loved much; who gained the respect of intelligent men and the love of children; who has filled his niche and accomplished his task; who leaves the world better than he found it, whether by an improved poppy, a perfect poem, or a rescued soul; who never lacked appreciation of Earth's beauty or failed to express it; who looked for the best in others and gave the best he had. (Plagge, Herb [Bob's Uncle] 1969)*

A poem and a relief picture of Bob Plagge are on a brass plaque at the entrance of the Plagge Memorial Center built by the Franken Construction Company:

1921 REV. ROBERT G. PLAGGE 1969  
THE PLAGGE MEMORIAL CENTER  
FOR THE TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION OF ALCOHOLICS  
DEDICATED AUG 5, 1973 AS A LIVING MEMORIAL TO  
ROBERT G. PLAGGE, PASTOR OF THE FIRST UNITED PRESBYTERIAN  
OF LAS VEGAS, N.M. FROM 1964 TO 1969  
"A MAN OF GOD  
TALL IN THE SADDLE; TALL IN THE LIVES HE TOUCHED;  
TALLER STILL IN THE SIGHT OF GOD!  
WITH A JOLLY LAUGHTER FROM THE DEEP,  
STUBBORN AS HE SAW RIGHT,  
RESTLESS AGAINST INJUSTICE,  
TOUGH AS THE PIÑON WHICH BRAVES A DESERT WASTE;  
FREE-RANGING IN THE GRANDEUR AS THE SANGRE DE CRISTOS,

AND STRAIGHT AS THE PINES;  
LOOK AROUND AND SEE THE MONUMENTS, PEOPLE TOUCHED  
BY HIS COMPASSION FOR OTHERS. TRULY THE SYMBOL OF  
HIS LIFE'S MINISTRY AS A GREAT SERVANT OF GOD"

BY: ARTHUR R. HALL

## BOB PLAGGE'S LEGACY TO THE COMMUNITY OF LAS VEGAS

Bob committed tremendous time and energy as well as personal resources to community projects and much of his work has been carried on. He was a strong supporter of ecumenical activities in Las Vegas: he worked enthusiastically with Reverend Geoffrey Butcher of the Episcopal Church and Reverend Donald Alexander of the Christian Church to establish the 714 Coffee House, a ministry to university students at New Mexico Highlands University.

The St. Vincent de Paul clothing store was established in cooperation with Monsignor Sipio Salas, Rector of the Immaculate Conception Church of Las Vegas. Good, clean, repaired second-hand clothing has been available to needy people since the inception of the program. At first volunteers worked in the First Presbyterian Church making needed repairs to the clothing and the "store" was located in a small building belonging to the Catholic Church. Today, very few clothes are received that need repairs. There is a volunteer who does repairing at her home. After the Plagge Memorial Center was built, the clothing "store" was moved to the old Presbyterian Mission church. Clothing is generally sold for 10 to 25 cents.

With other ministers in Las Vegas, Plagge organized "Open House" for outpatients of the State Mental Hospital who were invited to weekly parties that helped them gain perspective and poise because of the interest and concern shown by the churches and the volunteers.

Bob organized an Alcoholics Anonymous Radio Program, which spread the word that anyone addicted to alcohol who wanted help could find it with a phone call. When the program began, Las Vegas was experiencing more than 100 addict deaths a year. Six years later deaths were down to 36 a year.

The Council on Alcoholism was formed to provide answers to the local problem. A retired railroad engineer who had been an alcoholic was living in Las Vegas and was recruited to join our congregation and work with the program. About six Presbyterian couples who were farmers from North Dakota came to Las Vegas in their mobile homes to form a "work camp" and at the same time get away from the cold North Dakota winter. They remodeled the old Mission church to provide accommodations for five or six alcoholics.

Nash Flores, a former alcoholic, and his wife Cleo moved into the old Mission church to provide temporary housing and meals for alcoholics who were trying to overcome their addiction. They named

the organization the Oasis Club. The need for bigger and better accommodations was apparent.

At that time interest grew in treating alcoholism as a disease rather than a personality disorder. Many people in Las Vegas worked with Bob in the alcoholic rehabilitation program. Among them was Bill Sears, a psychiatrist at the New Mexico Mental Health Division, Las Vegas Medical Center.

Bob's death at this critical time was disastrous for the outreach programs, but the pastor search committee found that Rev. Al Juterbock of Allen Park, Michigan, had experience working with alcoholics. He received a call from the First United Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas, which he accepted.

The Council on Alcoholism continued with plans for a bigger and better center, and under the leadership of Al Juterbock, the old building on church property next to the Mission church was torn down by volunteers in 1972. The land was eventually leased for a period of 50 years for the purpose of the new \$130,000 structure to be named the Plagge Memorial Center. A Presbyterian architect from Santa Fe, Hugo Zehner, designed the building. The 50 Million Fund of the First Presbyterian Church of U.S.A. provided some of the money. Another source was the New Mexico Mental Health Grant #2. Local builder Steve Franken's bid was \$20,000 under the next lowest bid. The funds were still \$27,000 short but Al Juterbock played his cards right and succeeded in getting the amount needed from a state agency that had at first turned him down.

On 11 February 1973 open house was held at The Plagge Memorial Center.

Dale B. Gerdeman 1996

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*Las Vegas Daily Optic*, March 31, 1969.

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James C. Plagge, Ph.D., Okemos, MI.

Karan Plagge, Las Vegas, NM.

Curtis Plagge, Las Vegas, NM.



Louie Plagge, Las Vegas, NM.

Dennis Plagge, Albuquerque, NM.

Roy Browning, Las Vegas, NM.

James E. Caulkins, Pastor, Okanogan Presbyterian Church, Okanogan,  
WA.

Arthur R. Hall, Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church, Bethesda, MD.

Dr. James R. Hine, Assoc. Pastor, Trinity Presbyterian Church, Tucson,  
AZ.

Mr. and Mrs. Carlos Gilbert, Las Vegas, NM.

James and Stevie Mabry, Las Vegas, NM.

Msgr. Sipio Salas, Rector, Immaculate Conception Church, Las Vegas,  
NM.

## REV. ALBERT RUSSELL JUTERBOCK

*Beginning in 1969 Al Juterbock administered a very active program of eighteen different projects in Las Vegas. In 1981 he began losing his voice, was placed on disability, and at the end of the year moved to Mears, Michigan. Al remembered his time in Las Vegas as the most of his life. He saw his ministry as being half pastor and half social worker for Christ.*

Albert R. "Al" Juterbock was born in Detroit, 8 May 1924, to Frank Albert Juterbock and Frances Marie Russell Juterbock. He had a younger brother, John Thomas, and sister, Janice Patricia. His parents were divorced in 1929 and thereafter the family was seldom in a stable condition. By his 18th year Al had lived in 14 different homes and an orphanage. He attended seven elementary and high schools and graduated from Cooley High School in Detroit in 1942.



He joined Training Program at Central Michigan College (University) in Mount Pleasant, where he met Dorothy L. Barritt in the Presbyterian College Youth Group. They were married on Al's pre-embarkation leave 7 May 1945. Al was shipped to the Pacific and was on Okinawa when the war ended. Al returned to the United States on 2 December 1945.

He entered Michigan State College (University) in February 1946 and graduated

two years later with a B.A. in economics (labor relations.) Two children were born to the couple during this time, Barry Allen (deceased) and Anne Deborah. Al then took graduate work in economics until he accepted a position teaching in Dimondale High School (Michigan) in 1948. The same year he was also employed as an executive with the Boy Scouts of America and worked in the Joliet, Illinois, and Muskegon, Michigan councils. In 1947 Al was commissioned as an officer in the Army and in 1951 was recalled to active duty and sent to Korea as an artillery officer. He returned to the States at the end of 1952.

From 1950 to 1955, Stephen Eric, Mary Rebecca, and Susan Carol were born. Al enjoyed these years very much but said that their church, the Ludington Community Church, was without a minister for over one and a half years, and he and Dorothy had to decide to do either church work or Boy Scout work. They chose the former.

**Rev. Albert R.**

In 1955 under the care of the Lake Michigan Presbytery and the board of elders of the Community Church, Al attended McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago. The couple lived the first year in Chicago and the next two and one-half years in Sidney, Illinois, where he became the student pastor for the First Presbyterian Church. Until graduation, after the fall semester 1958-1959, Al commuted the 160 miles (one way) each week, with four days at seminary and three days at home. In the following years, the church in Sidney became a thriving congregation associated with the United Church of Christ and built a beautiful stone building.

On 1 January 1959 the Juterbocks were called to the Allen Park (Michigan) Presbyterian Church. Dr. Wanzer Hull Brunelle, the pastor, had united the Juterbocks in marriage. They served this congregation for almost 11 years during which the congregation grew from 2200 to just short of 3000 members. During the troubled years of the 60s, Al became very active in the Presbytery of Detroit, serving on the Church and Society Committee and Budget Committee. He also was very active at the state level, serving the Synod of Michigan and the Michigan Council of Churches in various fields of social and political action. It was this action which caused a fellow seminarian to refer his name to the pastoral nominating committee of the First Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas.

The social work in Las Vegas was organized with a board of deacons serving as the directors, and Al and many volunteers working as the staff of the agency. These years showed a major change in a poverty-stricken and troubled area. Al affirmed that Christ can and does make a difference. At one time, the work of the extended ministry had eighteen different projects going. A new building for the rehabilitation of alcoholics was built. Language lessons in colloquial Spanish were given. Programs directed to teen-age parents were started and continued until the state absorbed them and they expired. The only manufacturing plant in San Miguel County at that time was opened and operated for four years. The Northeastern Council on Mental Health began.

The list was ever-changing and growing. At one time eleven congregations were supporting the work of the Las Vegas ministries. Two congregations from the Presbytery of Santa Fe entered financially into this ministry. During this period, Rev. Dr. Alfonso Esquibel served arduously with Al and the congregation. At one time there were six ordained persons participating in the Las Vegas congregation. Al was convinced that in an area where unemployment was as high as fifty percent (not official figures) our Lord had a purpose for those not officially employed. At one time he had twelve full-time volunteers working in the projects.

In 1975 with the encouragement of elder Lillian Rogers, Al received the permission of the Session to enter the Doctor of Ministry

program at McCormick Theological Seminary. The major research project selected by Al and his supervisory committee was *The Relationship of a Local Congregation to High Judicatories of the United Presbyterian Church, USA, in trying to establish a National Program* (Volunteer in Mission, Young Adult Program.) The program ended when the national church staff felt that the project might cause them more work than they could handle.

Al received his D. Min. degree in May 1982 in Rockefeller Chapel of the University of Chicago. In the meantime, he had been placed on disability. While moderator of the Presbytery of Santa Fe, he had been losing his voice. After repeated care, he felt that he could not function as a pastor without a voice. In 1981 Mayo Clinic diagnosed it as "intermittent voice syndrome" caused by overwork and stress. The Juterbocks retreated to their home in Michigan.

In 1983 Al was called to the Ipava (Illinois) United Presbyterian Church. In 1985 the Las Vegas congregation sent a work camp of 15 youth and leaders, headed by Elizabeth and George Bunch, to aid the Ipava congregation in establishing two bell choirs, with leaders. The next year these choirs went for a week to a national festival in Ames, Iowa. In 1986 this congregation celebrated its sesquicentennial. The church was established 23 June 1836. This was a joyous time for Al, as the Christian life brings joy to him.

As with the past three congregations, the thought of leaving was hard, but he and Dorothy retired from the active ministry 30 June 1987. They live in their home on Lake Michigan and to visit their children and grandchildren as often as they can.

Albert R. Juterbock 1987

## DOROTHY L. BARRITT JUTERBOCK

*Dorothy Juterbock was a busy minister's wife. She was director of youth activities working with pre-school children. In addition to raising her family she was involved regularly in cooking activities for the church. Dorothy remembers these as "fun years" with many friends from the congregation.*

Dorothy Barritt was born in Shelby, Michigan, on 17 March 1923 to Jackson Barritt and Mae Riley Barritt. Her home was less than one block from the main street, the public school, and the Congregational Church that she joined when she was 14. She graduated with a



Bachelor of Science degree and a teacher's certificate in secondary education in 1945 from Central Michigan College (University) in Mount Pleasant. During her junior year, she met Al Juterbock who was a student in a naval program, and they were married on 7 May 1945 at the college while he was on a pre-embarkation leave.

1945

Michigan State in East Lansing where he obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1947. Their first child Anne Deborah was born 17 January 1948.

became

family moved to Joliet, Illinois, where Stephen Eric was born on 24 January 1950.

During the Korean conflict Al was in the Army, and Dorothy and her family spent fifteen months moving from Illinois to Colorado, Oklahoma, California, and Michigan.

Al returned to his job with the Boy Scouts and the family moved to Ludington, Michigan, in December 1952, where Mary Rebecca was born on 18 December 1953.

**Dorothy Barritt**

Dorothy and Al had become more and more active in churches, both Congregational and Presbyterian, during these years. Al entered McCormick Seminary in Chicago the morning after Susan Carol was born 7 September 1955. They had a small apartment on the campus the first year, then Al and the family moved to Sidney, Illinois, where he took a job as student pastor. He commuted each week to Chicago to continue his studies for two and one-half years. Dorothy took care of their four children and church duties during his absence.

On 8 February 1959 Al was ordained in the Community Church of Ludington, Michigan. This congregation gave the family a great amount of support, both emotional and financial. The family then

began a ministry in the Allen Park (Michigan) Presbyterian (later United) Church, which lasted for more than ten years. During those years they hosted several teen-aged youths from troubled homes in their home. One, Leslie Jean (Yoder) Kerl, and her family now claim Dorothy and Al as parents.

Dorothy and Al started to build their Lake Michigan home in 1967 not too far from Dorothy's birthplace. In September 1969 the family left Allen Park for Las Vegas, New Mexico, and a different type of ministry. Allen Park was a large suburban church with multiple staff; Las Vegas was a small church.

Over the years, Dorothy had little time to pursue her career as a teacher. She did teach one semester of English in a secondary school in Lansing but did not like the discipline problems she encountered there. She spent time in several short-term positions, filling in where someone was needed or when extra income was required to keep their home. She worked as a director of youth activities in the First Presbyterian Church in Lansing while Al was overseas during World War II. She was office assistant for a doctor for a time and worked, too, as salesclerk in a department store. While in Las Vegas, she served lunch to grade school children. She particularly enjoyed working in the New Horizons Pre-school in Las Vegas for two years when Barbara Stubbs was the head teacher.

Dorothy and Al are currently part of the Ipava United Presbyterian Church in a small Illinois village much like the one in Sidney, two hours away, where Al once served as student pastor. Dorothy has enjoyed her position as village librarian in Ipava, something she has always dreamed of doing. Al retired from the active ministry on 30 June 1987 and they live in the home they built on Lake Michigan.

Dorothy says her career was to mother numerous children and serve as minister's wife. She said, "I've tried to be active in Al's ministry wherever needed. I've always taken part in the women's work and taken on much of the fellowship of the congregation. Our home was open for about anything. I did camp work, cooking as well as leadership in a wide variety of camps. I found my ministry in wedding receptions, showers, farewell parties, confirmation class meals, etc. I also tried to organize Al's office. It seemed natural to edit church newsletters for a good number of years".

Our children are scattered now from California, New Mexico and Minnesota, to New York. We have three grandchildren as well as three "honorary" grandchildren. We have a number of close friends who have built in our Lake Michigan community. We look forward to spending more time with friends there and across the country. Friends are probably the most precious gift I've been given and I count my family among my friends.

Dorothy L. Juterbock 1987

## DON AND HILDA WALES

***Don didn't ask Hilda to marry him. He simply said, "I want you to go with me wherever I go." She didn't know that when she said yes it meant a gate had just opened to adventures neither had imagined, a gate to the wider world.***



Wales  
but  
Lake  
near

*An autobiography is more memories than statistics and more impressions than events. Statistics may trigger the memories and impressions recognize the deeds, but our recollections of people and places are the texture of our lives. And when two people tell a shared story, sometimes it will be biography and sometimes, autobiography. You will find a mix of "we" and "he" and "she" in this brief story of the journey we are taking. (Wales 1997)*

Born in Los Angeles on 20 July 1928 Don grew up on the Southern California Coast other places shaped his life: Big Bear in the Sierras, the Army Research Center Baltimore, Maryland, San Francisco Theological Seminary, the Laguna Indian Reservation in New Mexico, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Chile, Mexico, Northumberland, England, San Antonio, Texas, and Las Vegas, New Mexico.

And in every location, there were roles--duties that defined limitations offering challenges, both the expected and always the unexpected. His roles were the obvious ones: son, brother, student, husband, father, pastor, and friend.

More important, however, than either the places or the roles, was the parade of individuals with whom he shared those places and those experiences. These are only a few of the people:

*First family:* Mom and Dad, Dick, Nana and Grandpa;

*Second family:* Hilda, Sharon, Heidi, Rebecca and David, and seven grandkids;

*Friends and co-workers:* The "old gang", Grampy, seminary friends, Presbyterian congregations of Laguna Pueblo, Copiapo and Chanaral, Chile, Embleton and Seahouses on the North Sea, Pilgrim Presbyterian Church in San Antonio and Las Vegas, New Mexico.

*And a parade of people passing by:* The people in the tiny village of San Miguel de Apodaca and the industrial city of Monterrey, Mexico, fleeting contacts in the Guatemalan Highlands with the Mam Indigenous people, on the border of Mexico, at summer camps and conferences. Out of that parade came special friends, all along the way.

**Rev. Don & Hilda**



"Growing up" in Southern California meant early memories of living in one of the beach communities before it was trendy. Those were days of sun and sand and friends and learning--interspersed by days of worry about money (the depression), health (polio at age 9), and war. Contact is still maintained with a few grade school friends from Hermosa Beach.

*Recollections:* Living at Big Bear Lake where his mother was the postmistress; memories of careening down the mountain to San Bernadino with a broken nose from playing football; Glendale High School, still playing football and building more lifelong friendship known as "the old gang." The "old gang" was shepherded by an old railroader, Grampy, who taught the lads that they were "Sons of the King" and Don's faith grew. Grampy tolerated no backsliders. Everyone was committed--or they weren't. The "Sons of the King" had a quartet and music was added to Don's life.

Pre-med undergraduate studies were at the University of California in Los Angeles in biology and chemistry. After receiving a B.S. degree Don went on to do graduate work at UCLA, disrupted by being drafted into the army. It was that experience, working at the Army Chemical Center in Maryland, where he decided that working with people in the context of their faith was far more interesting and productive for him than working with the elements. So, the call to seminary came at age 26 and after years of study in the sciences, another long formal educational process began.

During those seminary years a special friend stepped out of the parade. She came from a place far from the beaches of Southern California. From an isolated area in the Colorado Rockies, Hilda Peterson had grown up a "country girl." Her parents had been homesteaders in Southwest Colorado; her mother, a teacher in one-room schools and small country high schools and her father, a rancher.

It was during Don's last year and Hilda's first year at San Francisco Theological Seminary that they met--during the first week of school. Hilda had gone to the seminary to study Christian Education after completing her B.A. degree in the humanities at Cornell College in Mount Vernon, Iowa.

*One of those special memories:* Hilda went to a get-acquainted outing at Point Reyes on the beach with someone else, but returned with Don, beginning a lifetime friendship. Don received his B.D. from San Francisco Theological Seminary in 1958. We married on 29 June 1958 in Durango, Colorado, immediately following Don's graduation. From that point, we experienced the places and the people together. We became a family and our autobiography is shared.

The week after the wedding we moved to New Mexico to live on the Laguna Indian Pueblo, where Don was pastor of three small congregations. With three congregations, three church services, three Sunday Schools, three Sessions, three after-school programs, three

women's groups, etc. etc., the car was forever at the side of the road with a flat tire or a broken something or other, the result of rough reservation roads.

*Remembering those first years:* We sometimes recall our feeling of isolation. We lived in one of the seven villages of the pueblo and our congregations were in three other villages. It wasn't unusual to have people cross themselves as they met the Wales at the door of the post office and curious little boys would ask: "Is it true that you work for the devil?" Times have certainly changed, but one of our best memories is of the friendship and support of the Catholic nuns who worked in the same villages.

The first Sunday service was at Paguate at 7:00 on Sunday mornings, so Don made the fire in the wood stove while Hilda rang the church bell so that the congregation would know we had arrived. Only then would they make their way to the church. Then it was on to Seama, the village farthest from Paguate for a 9:00 A.M. service, and to Casa Blanca for an 11:00 o'clock service. Sharon Marlene and Heidi Laine were born while we lived at Old Laguna, both on Mondays. This was our day off for shopping, banking and getting away to Albuquerque, and the girls cooperated.

One summer day, while Hilda was hanging out diapers under an old cottonwood tree, Don came out of his study to inquire: "How would you like to go to South America?" Hilda kept on with the diapers, but answered: "Why not?" It was a corner turned, a new direction. At Laguna, we learned how to be each other's best friend, something for which we are forever grateful.

By January of 1962 the family was at Stony Point, New York, in a six months' training program for overseas service. Part of the following year was spent in Costa Rica in an immersion course in Spanish. Then we caught a freighter and headed south to Chile.

For four years we lived in Copiapo, a mining town on the Atacama, known as "the driest desert in the world," where in some places there has never been any recorded rainfall. Don served two congregations, at Copiapo and 70 miles away, at Chanaral. More bad roads--usually the car was totally incapacitated, but we could always walk: behind the horse-drawn hearse for funerals, up into the barren barrios where poverty was unimaginable, to church on Sunday where there had been Presbyterians for 100 years, where the floor of the Sunday School area was of well-trod dirt and the people were faithful.

Faithful Christians and dirt are part of our memories of Copiapo. Scenes remain in our minds of the continually blowing sand from mountains so barren that there was not a blade of grass or any living thing growing there. We think of women preparing a meal of bread, cheese and a cup of milk (dried milk from Church World Service mixed liberally with water). The children sat on the ground, using old benches for tables. We remember a group of miners who had refused

to work for a company which paid them a dollar a day for pick and shovel work in dangerous mines. These miners gathered at a union hall wondering how to feed their children and we remember that the church was able to help with temporary relief, again from Church World Service. There are memories of Christmas as the hottest day of the year and of a "tree" made of a couple of branches tied together. Two of our children were born there, Rebecca Ellen and David Andrew.

At the end of the term in Chile Don returned for a master's degree in Christian Education at San Francisco Theological Seminary. It was 1967-68 and the United States was in turmoil. We had been away for five years and came home to riots, the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy and people burning their draft cards. Things had changed. We were very grateful for a year to catch up on what had been happening in our homeland, having spent five years away without a telephone, radio or television. When a newsmagazine would arrive in Copiapo, we would devour it cover to cover.

But it was a jolting educational process--seeing the anger, the assumptions that people were making about one another and the polarization of communities. At the same time, we regretted that so many people in the States were so caught up in what was going on here that their interest in other places and peoples of the world seemed rare and short-lived.

After a year of study and regrouping, our next assignment was in the industrial city of Monterrey, Mexico, so different from the small mining towns in Chile. Foreigners could not be ministers of churches in Mexico, but the National Presbyterian Church had asked for people to come to help in other ways. Don went as an evangelist and educator but ended up helping run a chicken cooperative and teaching literacy classes as well. Monterrey was a huge city. Without a specific congregation it was hard for us to find a special faith community for our family. However, as a family of six, our memories of four years in Monterrey are happy.

Finishing the term in Mexico in 1972, we moved to San Antonio, Texas, where Don was the pastor of Pilgrim Presbyterian Church. Highlights: sharing life with a congregation spread all over the northern part of the city; marrying and burying, laughing with the choir, miles of city driving and a caring congregation that reached out to the neighborhood by initiating and building a retirement center for more than 100 people. It was located adjacent to the church. Don recalls showing up late to a funeral one time because there were four Sunset Memorial Gardens, and someone had forgotten to tell him it was the one on the far south side of town.

For Hilda, it was a time of change as well. With our children in school, we started taking in foster teenagers from the Bexar County Juvenile Probation Department. Eventually, Hilda worked as assistant

and then director in developing a shelter home program for teenagers who had been picked up by the police, but who shouldn't be kept in the detention center. As challenging as it was to become involved in the whole process of juvenile justice, she was always interested in finding out why people do what they do and where they acquire their assumptions about life. During our marriage, more time had been spent in other cultures than in our own. One day Don brought home a catalogue from the University of Texas at San Antonio that reviewed a new program in bicultural studies. It was another change of direction. Hilda received her M.A. in 1977 under that program.

Everyone was studying. Don received his Doctor of Ministry at Theological Seminary in 1981. The children began to leave for college and also sought out other experiences--experiences that gave the whole family glimpses of different places around the world. Sharon was an exchange student in Ghana, West Africa immediately following her senior year. Heidi eventually went for her junior year abroad to Scotland and David spent his high school senior year in the Philippines. Rebecca hadn't chosen to study overseas, but later worked for a time as a flight attendant and traveled all over the world to places that the rest of us had only dreamed of visiting--Delhi, Helsinki, Caracas and others. A travel dream for the whole family came about as a result of answering an ad for a summer exchange of pulpits in northern England. We spent the summer in a small village on the North Sea, the rest of us having tea, picking raspberries and making friends while Don did his pastoral duties with several small congregations.

After 10 years in San Antonio it was time for a change. We looked toward the West, hoping to find a small, multicultural town with a university near the mountains. The First Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas, New Mexico, was looking for a minister and the match was made. On 15 November 1982 we began Don's ministry to a delightful congregation, an interesting small town and lifetime friendships. The result was a perfect match. Don had found another maverick congregation. They were wonderful years.

Another match was made when Hilda was employed as coordinator of student services and counselor by the United World College, an international high school at nearby Montezuma. For 12 years, not a day went by that she didn't feel stimulated and appreciate the miracle of learning from students from all around the world.

We both retired from our respective positions and careers on 31 August 1995. After teaching some seminars in dispute resolution at United World Colleges in Wales, Norway and Italy and volunteering in Guatemala, we moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico. From our balcony, we can see Mount Taylor where our life together began on the Laguna Pueblo many years ago. This isn't the end of our journey, but New Mexico has been and probably always will be the point from which we

go out to discover more about this world and its people, a place to start on some new adventures. Why not?

Hilda Wales 1997  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

# 6

## 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY PRESBYTERIANS IN LAS VEGAS

Any attempt to honor those that have made special contributions to our church will inevitably leave out more members than it includes. God seems to balance a congregation with an array of talents and financial resources from “rich” to poor. These brief biographical sketches feature certain individuals who in their own way contributed greatly to the First United Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas during the twentieth century.

It is often said a good citizen leaves his community better than he/she found it. This description would apply to everyone in this chapter. Evelyn Irish was the first woman to hold the office of elder in our church and did an outstanding job. She was also acclaimed by the people of Las Vegas for her leadership in acquiring a new, much-needed hospital building. Morris and Owen Shillinglaw became successful businessmen and outstanding civic-minded citizens despite being extremely handicapped by arthritis. These are but a few of the remarkable members featured here.

The author is indebted to the many relatives and friends who wrote or assisted in writing these biographies. Their names are acknowledged in the text along with other resources.

## EVELYN FLEMING IRISH

***Evelyn Irish became the first woman elder in the church. She also took a strong lead in helping Las Vegas build a new, much-needed hospital. Highly respected throughout the state, she was the first woman to serve on a federal jury in New Mexico.***

The Presbyterian Church at 1000 Douglas Avenue was entering its eighty-sixth year when the congregation determined that the time was ripe, and it elected a woman to serve as elder. The woman so honored was Evelyn Fleming Irish. Child of the covenant, she had been



baptized there by Rev. Norman N. Skinner on 15 September 1907 at the tender age of thirteen months and had been nurtured by the congregation through the years. She had earned their trust and confidence by faithful service in church and community and so, at the annual congregational meeting of January 11, 1956, she was duly elected a ruling elder. The pulpit was vacant at the time, and Tomas Gonzalez, pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Old Town,

moderated the historic meeting.

George A. Fleming, Evelyn's father, had come from Chicago in 1899, seeking the sunshine and dry climate of Las Vegas for his health. In less than a year he had recovered and so moved to Santa Fe in 1901 to serve as the first assistant secretary for the Territory of New Mexico. (New Mexico achieved statehood in 1912.) Fleming returned to Chicago to marry in the summer of 1901. He brought his wife Maude to a new little brick house with grass in the front yard and indoor plumbing, where the two were the envy of their friends in Santa Fe, truly a frontier town in those early months of the new century.

### **Noble & Evelyn F. Irish**

George considered Las Vegas the most promising town in the territory; through it passed the Santa Fe railroad; it boasted the only electric streetcars in the state; and many businesses and industries flourished. After two years, he and Maude moved there and built a two-story frame house at 1035 Fifth Street. In 1904 George established a real estate and insurance business.

Impressed by Norman Skinner's deep and penetrating sermons, the couple joined the Presbyterian Church in 1905.

Daughter Evelyn Louise was born at home to the couple on 24 July 1906. "Our home was almost the last house on the street," Evelyn

wrote in a brief autobiographical sketch, "with possibly two others between ours and the Castle School. Beyond that there was nothing but vacant land... East of the town was ranching country devoted entirely to the raising of sheep and cattle." One of Evelyn's early memories was of watching day after day as groups of men drove burros past the house. The animals carried wood on their backs from the isolated Hispanic villages in the mountain regions to the west, and the men traded firewood at one of the big wholesale stores for food and other supplies needed.

Another vivid memory was of how as a little girl she used to walk over to Sixth Street and board the electric trolley to ride down to church. The conductor was a Mr. Smith, and he would tinkle the bell for her as they came slowly down the hill, turned left at Douglas and circled over past the Casteneda Hotel. Often if she were early, Mr. Smith would let her ride with him out to the end of the line at the State Hospital, letting her out in front of the church on his return trip. Evelyn remained an only child.

Evelyn recalled:

*"In my early childhood my father drove back and forth to his office via horse and buggy. The beautiful bay horse named Dan was very gentle during the day but when six o'clock approached he became uncontrollable in his determination to get home in the fastest possible time! I'm not sure when it was that Dan was put out to pasture and my father went modern and bought our first automobile. He took delivery of the car in Denver and encountered endless difficulties driving it to Las Vegas over dirt roads. Streams and arroyos that had to be forded, sometimes having to be pulled across by a team of horses. There were clouds of dust to contend with as well. Upon his arrival in Las Vegas, his wife was convinced the car had aged ten years! George showed ranchlands and buildings to prospective buyers by horse and buggy or by car."*

Evelyn thought her father might well have written a book about the harrowing and humorous experiences he had. She remembers those childhood years as happy ones. For the grade school and the first three years of high school she walked to the Castle School that was a two-story, red stone building designed to look like a castle. As classmates would carry their lunch and eat at school in bad weather, Evelyn often wished she lived farther afield.

Because Evelyn had grown up in the Southwest and had never been east of Chicago, her parents encouraged her to enroll in an Eastern school. It was decided that she should attend Virginia College, a girl's boarding school in Roanoke. Evelyn wrote, "After much shopping, dressmaking and packing, I was started on my way to Virginia with a stopover in Chicago to visit relatives. Having lived all of my life in the shadow of the Rockies, I'll never forget my disappointment when I got my first glimpse of the Blue Ridge Mountains from the train window. They were just hills--beautiful, but



not mountains." Life at a small southern girls' school was restrictive, with "more rules and regulations, it seemed, that a military school, yet we had fun." During that year, there was a well-chaperoned trip to Washington for the inauguration of President Coolidge and to see all the sights.

"It was a worthwhile experience," Evelyn wrote, "but one year was enough for me." Evelyn enrolled at the University of Colorado in Boulder for her sophomore and junior years, pledged Pi Beta Phi sorority and lived in the house after she was initiated, thoroughly enjoying her association with a fine group of women there.

Evelyn was sure by then that she wanted to be a kindergarten or primary teacher. "All my life I loved children--especially the little ones. As a young girl, I liked nothing better than to take care of some neighbor's baby or toddler for the afternoon--and for free, if you please!" She enrolled at the National Kindergarten College in Evanston, Illinois, a school affiliated with Northwestern University. In her brief autobiography, Evelyn tells of an event that transpired there on the day she enrolled:

*"I was standing in line, waiting to register, when an attractive girl came up to say she was a Pi Phi and had noticed my arrow. We chatted quite awhile and after registering found we were in some of the same classes. About two weeks later Eugenia Moore invited me to come to her home in Glencoe for Sunday dinner...After I had met her family and we had visited for awhile, her father handed me a picture of two boys and asked if I recognized either of them. To my utter amazement, I realized one was my father. Mr. Moore explained that he and my dad had been boyhood pals in Hinsdale, Illinois and had continued their friendship for several years after their families moved to Chicago. Their paths drifted apart, but he had heard that Dad had settled in New Mexico...He wondered if I could be George Fleming's daughter. As the old saying goes, it's a small world."*

Evelyn thoroughly enjoyed her work at National Kindergarten College. One especially challenging practice-teaching assignment was at Hull House in a slum district of Chicago. Founded by Jane Addams in 1889, it was the first such settlement house in the United States, opened to serve the needs of immigrant families in the neighborhood. For its founding and for long years of service there, Addams received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931.

Upon graduation Evelyn was glad to leave Chicago's climate and return to the Las Vegas sunshine, where her parents offered room and board while she sought employment.

She wrote,

*"To my consternation, I found that in spite of my specialized training, all of my applications were turned down for lack of experience. I began to wonder how one was supposed to get this experience if no one would give you an opportunity to acquire it! Fate was kind; just two weeks before the opening of school, the superintendent in Albuquerque called to say they were opening eight kindergartens and had been unable to find enough experienced teachers,*

*so I could have a position if I would be willing to accept a smaller salary. He offered me \$90 per month and I was delighted."*

Evelyn soon discovered that her room was to be directly across the hall from the superintendent's office. He told her he wanted to keep an eye on his youngest teacher. At first it made her anxious to look up and see Mr. Milne standing in the doorway but she soon learned that he was only interested and was very kind and understanding. She had a morning group of some 25 Hispanic youngsters, most of whom spoke little or no English, and an afternoon group of 30-35 Anglo children. She soon loved each child and found its progress rewarding.

Shortly after going to Albuquerque mutual friends introduced Evelyn to Noble Irish who had come from Rochester, New York for his health. Noble was working for the Nash dealership in town and so had a car. Evelyn used to tease that it was the car that attracted her to him. Their son Bill recalls them telling of their first date which was to attend the opening of the Kimo Theatre in Albuquerque. Al Jolson was featured in *The Jazz Singer*.

After a courtship of two years the two were married in 1929 and moved to El Paso. The shared struggles of those depression years strengthened the bond between them. Bill was born in El Paso, and when he was only a month old they boarded the train for a move to San Antonio. The baby became ill enroute and was crying day and night by the time of their arrival. The pediatrician who examined him sent the couple to an ear specialist who found a serious infection in both ears and recommended a double mastoid operation immediately. He warned that the infant's chances of survival were about 50-50. Blood transfusions were necessary and there was a long period of recovery. With the expert care of several specialists and the prayers of family and friends, Bill pulled through. Evelyn's mother Maude came to do what she could to help, and the young couple was grateful for her presence during that trying time.

The following year Noble's father-in-law, George Fleming asked him to come to Las Vegas to help with the agency. As rental properties were hard to come by, the couple built a home only two blocks from her parents. Though not large or fancy, Evelyn said, "It was new and attractive, and it was ours."

Through the years, Evelyn wrote, they did "all the things one does in a small town." Noble had been a Baptist but quickly became a Presbyterian and they were faithful members. Evelyn taught Sunday school and Vacation Bible School. She had been back but a short time when she was invited to join Chapter H of the P.E.O. Sisterhood.

There were bridge games and parties. Evelyn helped as a den mother for Bill's Cub Scout den and with Boy Scout and DeMolay activities as he was growing up. Another civic duty brought particular

distinction; she was the first woman to serve on a federal jury in New Mexico. She served a six-week term of court in Santa Fe and several years later served eight weeks in Albuquerque, which meant she had to drive back and forth alone on weekends in order to be with her family. Following this second term, Judge Hatch publicly acclaimed and thanked her for her outstanding service and valuable contribution to the jury system.

In the years during World War II and beyond, at the urging of then Superintendent of Schools Walter J. Robertson, Evelyn reluctantly agreed to teach fourth and later sixth grade at Castle School. Bill recalls this as a very difficult and trying experience for her, but she performed her tasks with her usual care and diligence, often working late into the night, preparing lesson plans and grading papers.

In 1946 her mother Maude Fleming died. Noble and Evelyn sold their home and moved into the house at 1035 Fifth Street to make their home with George and to look after things there. Now she was cooking, washing, and caring for three men. A household which spanned three generations could not be expected always to see matters in the same light, further complicating Evelyn's task.

Evelyn experienced real anxiety when facing a crowd. But she always appeared confident and in control-quietly competent and the epitome of a leader in spite of her anxiety. Knowledge of this makes doubly impressive her role in what was to be a crowning civic achievement of her lifetime.

Evelyn was greatly interested in the welfare of the hospital in Las Vegas and served on its board of trustees (referred to in early times as the Ladies Relief Society) during some fifteen years. Beginning in late 1948, her name began to appear frequently in the *Las Vegas Daily Optic* newspaper. She was then serving as the board president and feverish plans were being laid to construct a new hospital at the northwest corner of Eighth and Friedman Streets. The site had been purchased earlier when \$60,000 was obtained in 1944 through the efforts of former Ladies Relief Society president, Mrs. Edward S. Comstock. The new facility would replace the old two-story building, erected in 1904, beside the old city hall on Sixth Street. It had been converted in 1925 for hospital use and had formerly housed the Y.M.C.A. Though it had served the community for many years it was now considered inadequate in every way.

The folks in Las Vegas now undertook the enormous task of raising \$300,000. If they could reach their goal-and many citizens deemed this impossible the federal government would provide a Hillburton grant of \$150,000 matching the first \$150,000 raised locally. Citizens rallied behind the cause. Col. William Salman was elected general campaign chairman. Evelyn's family became intimately involved. George Fleming, always a public-spirited gentleman, had taken an interest in the hospital's affairs across the years. He served

on the finance committee, records show, as early as 1915. Now chairman of the board of the Bank of Las Vegas, he was named treasurer for the campaign. Julius Rosenthal served as secretary, with Noble Irish as his assistant. Noble was on hand for the kick-off, recording pledges turned in at a report meeting following the first three days of solicitation.

Eighteen female board members were divided into three groups and each group was assigned to a committee. Evelyn served on the Town Prospects Committee with Dr. Mortimer, chief of staff at the hospital, serving as chairman.

In the *Las Vegas Daily Optic* of 16 February 1949 just five and a half weeks after the fund drive's kick-off, readers learned that the drive was over the top, with pledges standing at \$308,840.20! James W. Arrott, big gifts chairman for the drive, was quoted as saying, "The success of the Las Vegas Building Fund Campaign represents one of the greatest civic achievements in this section of New Mexico." He gave much of the credit to Mrs. Irish who, he said, had had the "fortitude to hire an outside organization to conduct the campaign." He referred to the Wells Organization of Texas, Incorporated, a firm which sent a representative to Las Vegas and helped them put together an impressive group of prominent community businessmen--"shakers and movers"--who could, when well-organized and motivated, insure the fund drive's victorious conclusion.

To many staid Las Vegans, the move to hire a professional firm was unthinkable. It was argued that citizens could handle the job without paying outsiders. But because of the firm's presence, the campaign was thoroughly organized before one donation was collected, and it was conducted with "precision and dispatch," according to an editorial appearing in the *Optic* on 1 March 1949. The wisdom of Evelyn Irish was reflected in the campaign's success; critics had been won over. Beyond that, Ivan J. Hilton, chair of the drive's steering committee, said, "Not only did Las Vegas gain a hospital, but workers in the campaign have become better citizens and have learned to know each other better through common work on the project."

In November 1949 the trustees, with Evelyn continuing as board president, signed a contract with Max Flatow and Associates, an Albuquerque architectural firm, to draft plans and supervise construction. There were to be several stages of construction over a period of five years. Fifty beds were envisioned for the present, and plans allowed for future expansion. Final approval for the project was announced in the *Optic* on 7 June 1950. Evelyn had received word via telegram from Leo P. Schwartz, director of New Mexico Hospital Service; he in turn had heard from the United States Public Health Service. Evelyn subsequently signed a contract with Ramey and Mathis, an Amarillo construction firm, for the sum of \$442,763. The government's portion of that amount came to \$272,000.

Ground-breaking ceremonies took place on 20 June 1950. With leading citizens circling a plot of ground under a blazing summer sun, Edward S. Comstock turned the first shovel of dirt in recognition of his late wife having given much time toward seeing that dream become reality. Mr. Comstock now served as a trustee of the hospital and he had greatly aided Mrs. Comstock in her efforts over the years. Scores of Las Vegans had shared the vision and now that vision was to have form and substance.

Following the flurry of the hospital campaign, Evelyn may have been looking for new worlds to conquer. In October of 1950, she accepted a place on the pastor nominating committee for her church. The committee considered candidates and then extended a call to Rev. William A. Arbuckle of the Presbyterian Church in Socorro after hearing him preach a trial sermon on 7 January 1951. Mr. Arbuckle gave serious thought to the matter but finally declined the invitation. The committee then called Rev. Dr. D. Clarence Burd, a gentleman in his sixties who was working at the Indian School in Farmington. He assumed his pastoral duties on 15 April 1951. (The terms of his call, incidentally, were \$3200 per year plus the manse!)

About this time an important person in Evelyn's story entered her life. Nora A. Montoya was a ninth grader at Robertson High School in 1951 and was searching for housework in the neighborhood. One Saturday morning she knocked at Evelyn's door, and she was hired. Nora's parents lived in Mora County, and she stayed in Las Vegas with an aunt. She said, "I was very lonely and looking for someone to like me." That longing was fulfilled as she became acquainted with the Irish family. Evelyn treated Nora with great kindness and patience, and Bill Irish has said, "Their relationship was every bit as close as if they had been actual mother and daughter." In 1954 Nora graduated from High School and soon thereafter married Arthur Tafoya. Nora remembers the couple with great affection and admiration. Mr. Irish helped them buy a home. Nora continued to work for them following her marriage and says that Evelyn taught her to value highly the traits of neatness, courtesy, honest and thoughtfulness. "I think of Mrs. Irish often," Nora wrote. "A lot of her ways are with me, and there are so many things in my house that remind me of her...She was happy and proud when I later got my AA degree from Highlands."

Meanwhile, Noble was "dabbling in politics as a pastime," as Evelyn put it. Campaigning with him in the rural Hispanic villages left her with vivid memories: "The political rallies were usually held in the little schoolhouse of each village and were big events in the lives of these people. They would line up around the walls or sit on wooden benches while the candidates made their speeches in English, assisted by an interpreter. Then one or two fiddlers would strike up a tune and men, women and children would dance. The wine flowed freely, and a big time was had by all."

George Fleming died in 1952, shortly before Noble went to the Sante Fe legislature for his first of two terms of office. Bill was then serving with the Air Force in Alaska, so Evelyn was free to close up the house. She went with Noble, staying at La Fonda Hotel during the three-month Session. Evelyn was proud of her husband's record as a legislator. Highly respected and widely read Santa Fe reporter, Will Harrison, selected Noble as the "most effective freshman," and he served as majority leader in the House and chaired the Appropriations Committee during his second term.

Evelyn's civic contributions did not diminish. She was appointed to a six-year term on the Board of Regents of New Mexico Highlands University and served the board as secretary-treasurer. At the time, enrollment was on the increase, and an extensive building program was undertaken. Financing required the issuance and sale of several million dollars in bonds. To her great dismay, she found it necessary to sign each and every one of those bonds--often two or three hundred at a time!

By now Bill had left the Air Force and had completed his undergraduate work at Highlands. After spending a couple of years in New York City, where he had undertaken the difficult task of trying to break into the theatrical world, he had returned to Highlands to pursue a master's degree, in order to teach drama. Thus his mother, serving on the Board of Regents, had the pleasure of presiding at the exercises and of signing his diploma.

After his father-in-law's death, Noble took a young man into the business. Some years later this arrangement made it possible for Noble to be free to serve as chairman of the board of the Bank of Las Vegas; he had been director for many years. Now with fewer responsibilities the couple had more opportunity to travel and vacation. Evelyn's Aunt Irene and family had moved from Watrous to San Diego some years earlier and Bill was teaching in La Jolla, so part of their vacation time was spent in California. Both Evelyn and Noble greatly enjoyed the area and decided to settle in La Jolla upon retirement. In 1969 they moved there after selling their business and home on Fifth Street in Las Vegas.

The transition was extremely difficult for Evelyn. A terrible homesickness plagued her for the first year, and Noble and Bill suffered to see her in tears so often. Helping her to make the adjustment were her sisters in P.E.O.'s Chapter SM, La Jolla, where she eventually held office as president and was honored for fifty years of service. She contacted the community's Pi Beta Phi alumni club, served as their corresponding secretary, and was awarded their Golden Arrow of Distinction. She joined the Monday Book Club and for three years tutored minority and educationally deficient children at La Jolla Elementary School.

Nora Montoya Tafoya kept up a lively correspondence from Las Vegas, called Evelyn by phone, and made four trips to California to see her. Nora never forgot Evelyn's kindness and her having never failed to remember Nora's birthday and anniversary. Evelyn loved and appreciated her many friends and was a thoughtful friend in return. She kept a record book in which were noted birthdays, anniversaries and other such important dates in the lives of her family and friends going back to her childhood. Bill wrote of his mother, "Each month she drew up her list and from the card and gift stores would carefully select just exactly the right and most appropriate greeting for each person on her list. If a gift was to be bought, she would search far and wide, often genuinely agonizing over the choice until she found just the thing she thought that specific individual would enjoy, no matter how simple or inexpensive it might be. It made no difference how busy she might be or how poorly she might feel; she never failed to remember others."

During the last few years of her life, Evelyn ministered weekly to two of her P.E.O. sisters who were, at different times, confined to a nursing home for lengthy stays of two or more years before their deaths. Though the visits caused her stress, for she greatly feared such an end to her own life, she continued these visitations beyond the time when she was recognized, taking flowers from her garden or a little treat of some sort.

Noble and Evelyn celebrated their golden anniversary in 1979. Recalling a book written on the history of Las Vegas subtitled "The Town that Wouldn't Gamble," Noble liked to pay tribute to his wife by affirming that he had certainly not gambled when he married Evelyn!

Noble passed away in February of 1980 and Evelyn died at Mission Bay Hospital in La Jolla of congestive heart failure on 3 October 1987 at the age of 81. The service was held at the La Jolla Presbyterian Church Chapel, with interment at El Camino Memorial Park.

We end this account with Bill's written tribute to his mother:

*The factual details of Mother's lifetime cannot begin to define or identify the essential character which endeared her to so many diverse people in so many ways and places...She was a gracious lady who went quietly about her business doing the endless thoughtful things which often seemed small or insignificant at the time, but which ultimately made you thankfully aware of her kindness and loving concern for her family, friends, associates, and those less fortunate human beings with whom she came in contact—those seemingly simple acts which demonstrated so clearly her truly Christian nature and spirit and which provided active testament to her abiding faith in God.*

Bill Irish and Dale B. Gerdeman

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*Preparing the Way*, by J. A. Schufle.



## C. BURNS AND LELA M. KURTZ

***The Kurtzes moved many times because of his work for the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway, but they became active members the Presbyterian Church in every community that was blessed with their presence.***

Cleo Burns Kurtz was born in Wellington, Kansas, on 27 September 1906, the fifth son of David H. and Jemima E. (Kauffman) Kurtz. He attended grades 1 through 12 in Wellington. He had six brothers and one sister. In December 1925 he moved to La Junta, Colorado, where



he worked two and one-half years for a funeral home, becoming a licensed embalmer in 1928. He returned to Wellington in 1928. In the fall of 1928 he entered Friends University, Wichita for two years. The Great Depression of the 1930s made it necessary that he seek employment, and he entered the service of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway in 1930.

wife,

area near Oak Hill, Kansas, the daughter of John Claude and Myrtle Z. (Snider) Carson. She moved with her family to Wellington, Kansas, at age 2. Like her future husband, she attended grades 1 through 12 in Wellington, graduating from high school in 1929. In the fall of 1929, she entered Friends University and attended three years, then had to find a job

because of the Great Depression. She was hired to be the only teacher at a country school, where she worked for two years. Grades 1 through 8 were all in the same room.

**C. Burns & Lela M.** The Kurtzes were married in June 1934. He served in several capacities with the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway before being promoted to division superintendent in 1951 at Dodge City, Kansas. During his career the family moved to several locations: Pueblo and La Junta, Colorado; Amarillo and San Angelo, Texas; Waynoka, Oklahoma; back to La Junta, Pueblo, Dodge City, Las Vegas, New Mexico; then back to La Junta, where he retired in 1971.

The Kurtzes had two children: Susan Kay, born in 1936, and Stephen Burns, born in 1939. Both children have university degrees, Susan in education and Stephen in medicine.

At all locations the Kurtzes were active in the First Presbyterian Church. Mrs. Kurtz taught Sunday school classes wherever they lived. They both served for terms as elders in Dodge City, Las Vegas and La

Lela

Junta. Mr. Kurtz was clerk of the Session for two years. He also served as chairman of the pastor search committee in 1973. Mrs. Kurtz served as president of the United Presbyterian Women for several terms. She was active in other organizations in the various locations where they lived.

Mr. Kurtz was active in Rotary and served as president of the La Junta club in 1972-73. He became a Rotarian in 1951 and belonged to the Dodge City, Las Vegas and La Junta clubs. He enjoyed visiting other clubs when traveling.

The Kurtzes also played a great deal of golf. They played with Cecil Hope in Las Vegas and La Junta. Mr. Kurtz was also an avid bowler until he was 86.

After retiring, Mr. Kurtz served a term as mayor of La Junta. Additionally he served as chairman of the board of directors, Colorado Boys Ranch, La Junta; president of both the La Junta Golf Club and the Southern Colorado Senior Golf Association, and president of the Arkansas Valley Shrine Club.

Mrs. Kurtz, after moving to La Junta the last time, joined the Arkansas Valley Regional Medical Center Auxiliary. She served four terms as President and started the "Country Fair" hospital fundraiser, which sold items made by the auxiliary. The fair has been in existence more than 20 years.

C. Burns Kurtz 1996

## **WILLIAM MORRIS SHILLINGLAW, JR.**

***The Awards Committee of the Governor's Council for the Handicapped selected Morris Shillinglaw as "New Mexico's Handicapped Person of the Year" in 1954. Morris quipped, "The Bible says that God made man in his own image. I don't believe that means God looks like me."***



William Morris Shillinglaw, Jr. was born 15 May 1909 in Las Vegas, New Mexico, the son of William Morris Shillinglaw, Sr. and his wife Gertrude Nenno Shillinglaw.

He attended Las Vegas schools and graduated from Las Vegas High School, where, at 6 feet tall, he was a star basketball player. Dale Gerdeman recalls:

"I have many memories of Morris Shillinglaw, as he was a neighbor and friend all during his life. His family lived across the street from us before I started grade school. His parents were close friends of my parents. His father, Will Shillinglaw, milked our cow, and we shared the milk with his family. Morris had a brother, Owen, and a sister, Dorothy. I remember when Morris was first struck with

arthritis and visited him at home several times during that difficult period." (1994)

Mrs. Frances Shipe worked for Morris as a secretary for five years, and describes his early years and the relentless progression of his arthritis:

**W. Morris**

*While he was in school, he worked at various jobs for the Santa Fe Railway. His family considered it a tragedy if all who were able to work did not work. He attended New Mexico Normal University in Las Vegas, and during his freshman year, when he was 18, was struck with rheumatoid arthritis and soon became bedfast. The arthritis left him frozen into a sitting position.*

*Morris had lost the use of many of his joints, and in 1948 in order to make him more comfortable, Dr. Breck of El Paso recommended he be immobilized in those joints.*

*He told Morris he should choose his position, and either he could sit or stand the rest of his life. Morris decided to have the operations, and in order to be mobile, chose the standing position. He went through a series of seven operations that took more than a year to complete. They removed his knees and fused the bones together. The movement of the hip joint was reduced so that he was able to take no more than a two-inch step. This enabled him to get around with a walker. After the operations his height was about five feet five. He retained about twenty percent of the movement in his arms and hands.*

*His mother was an unusually strong influence and encouraged him to use his infirmity as a strength, in that he could compensate intellectually, by striving for a profession that demanded mental ability. He chose to become a lawyer.*

*He borrowed law books and studied them in bed, under the supervision of two practicing attorneys William J. Haydon and J. R. "Dick" Modrall.*

*He passed the New Mexico State Bar examination 10 February 1937. It was a two-day examination. Morris was the only one permitted to use a typewriter. The special permit was granted because his hands were too crippled for him to write, but he could push the typewriter keys. Out of the forty-seven who took the examination Morris was one of seven who passed.*

*Morris' father had taken him over and stayed with him. After his father found out that Morris had passed, he called home. He just barely got the words out that Morris had passed, and he and Gertrude spent the next five minutes weeping over the long distance telephone. (Shipe 1986)*

The *Las Vegas Daily Optic*, reported Morris's outstanding achievement in an article titled "Qualified":

*An amazing performance of ambition was witnessed this week in Santa Fe during the bar examinations conducted in the Supreme Court. A score of candidates, many who were exceptionally well prepared, took the examinations and were successful in qualifying. But none of all these achieved a more notable success than Morris Shillinglaw, a Las Vegas youth...Morris Shillinglaw may or may not become a great lawyer but no one person has given to New Mexico youth a better example for courage and proper ambition than this Las Vegas youth whom members of the bar eagerly and gladly welcome to the profession today. (Optic February 11, 1937)*

After the operation, for Morris to get in or out of bed, his father would pick him up to move him from a standing to a lying position, or vice versa. He bought a walker and was able to get around on flat surfaces reasonably well. When he began to practice law, he rented office space on the first floor at the back of The Bank of Las Vegas. The office was about one and one-half blocks from his home. He generally walked to work, winter and summer, but at times it was necessary for him to go by car and his father would pick him up and fit him into the car. In time, his secretaries learned to move him from his walker into most cars if the doors were wide enough.

Frances Shipe continues:

*You would have to open both doors and slide him across the seat. As soon as his feet were far enough inside, you could go around to the other door, and push him up, and he could wiggle a little, and eventually you could get him in an upright position. It was a little bit like trying to put an ironing board in a car.*

*His mind was keen, and he, like others in his family, was more active in civic and public affairs than most of his fellow citizens.*

*He was very highly respected by his associates and everybody who had contact with him. In the field of law people said he was a formidable opponent. Two attorneys who said this were Waldo Spiess and "Zig" Noble. Morris and Henry Blattman, whose office was on the second floor above his, had a friendly rivalry. Judge Armijo was very fond of Morris.*

*In 1952, Morris was elected to the New Mexico State Legislature, the House of Representatives, on the Republican ticket. When he went to the legislature, Tommy Thompson was manager of La Fonda. My husband, 'Red' Shipe, went over and supervised the hotel crew that put the bed up on legs so Morris could get in and out of bed. He had a trapeze rigged over his bed and he could put one foot into a strap on the floor, and then with pulleys using both hands he could pull himself up. He had invented this and used it at home, and also at a cabin he owned in his later years. He served as chairman of the Committee on Privileges and Elections, and as chairman of the Committee of Rules and Order of Business. He also served as a member of the Judiciary and Education Committees.*

*His service in the legislature was just as conscientious as everything else he did. Morris never missed a Session. Not very many legislators can say that. As a freshman legislator, he introduced 30 bills at one time. His bills would have brought some 29 different licensing boards under a central secretarial to reduce the cost of administration. In doing this he angered 29 groups. Another bill he introduced would change the ballot to what was called the Massachusetts type of ballot. I believe the Massachusetts type ballot is one that required the Governor and Lieutenant Governor to be in the same political party. This was opposed by both the Democrats and the Republicans. Morris was also very interested in the Presidential primary. He believed in government for all the people, and his first consideration was, "Does it benefit the public or does it benefit a special few?" He believed strongly that politics needed to remain close to the grass roots. The people in power were just not ready for that. This was his policy and he maintained it at all times. The Democratic Party had an overwhelming majority in San Miguel County and he was not reelected. He remained an active member of the Republican Party and at one time served as the party's state campaign chairman. (Shipe 1986)*

Will Harrison, a well-known New Mexico columnist, wrote:

*THE PEOPLE in the late legislature were better than the legislature. It was a high-class bunch of individuals who made the rather sorry record of the 21st Session.*

*Much of the class was in the newcomers. Perhaps the most outstanding of the new crowd was Rep. W. Morris Shillinglaw, Las Vegas Republican lawyer. (Optic March 16, 1953)*

Dale B. Gerdeman recalls light-hearted banter with Morris:

*I went to work in The Bank of Las Vegas after service in World War II. The bank occupied the same building in which Morris had his office. I had an interest in U. S. coins and had two one-cent pieces dated 1839. The design that year had a strangely shaped head and was different than the designs of previous years. The coin became known as the "booby-head" cent.*

*In 1952, we bought our first home and a suit-to-quiet-title was necessary. We wanted Morris to handle this expensive and time-consuming legal process for us. After he finished it, he found that he had inadvertently left out the name of one party who should have been named. Therefore, he started the process again, and also paid all the expenses connected with the second suit. He and I occasionally did some good-natured teasing. I decided to give him one of the "booby-head" cents to tease him about his error.*

*I gave him the coin and he began to question me about coin collecting. He decided it would be a good hobby for him, and I helped him get started. Thereafter, we spent enjoyable times talking about coins. He became well-versed and had put together a very nice collection in a short time. (Gerdeman 1994)*

In January 1954 Morris fell and broke his neck. He was in the hospital for four weeks and in traction the whole time.

His family was close friends with the Mosimann family and visited together often. The brothers Ed and Gus Mosimann lived near each other on their ranch in Rociada. Gus was married and had a family. The Mosimanns had a private fishing pond, and their friends were often to be found fishing there. One of the children, Margaret Mosimann, wrote about Morris for her English class in high school. Part of her story follows:

### ***I HAVE SEEN HEROISM***

*Usually the cowboys tied their ropes to the saddle with a slipknot. Then if they happened to come up against a mean steer, they could pull the knot and escape the danger. There were a few, however, who tied their ropes securely to the saddle. When they roped a steer, it never got away and sometimes rode them to the ground. These were the "tied-fast" men.*

*I knew a person who, though I never saw him ride, impressed me as being a "tied-fast" man...he was stricken with rheumatoid arthritis. One thing he could do was fish. He used a spinning reel and could side-arm cast. He enjoyed spending the weekend at our place and often fished from sun-up to sun-down. We would take time out and drive him back to town on Sunday...he passed on during a snowstorm, 12 February 1963. I was very young then, but it seemed like a bright candle in my life had burned out. The train had pulled out of the station.*

*It gave him much joyous satisfaction to catch a fish. He loved to join in and listen to fishing yarns with other fishing enthusiasts. He bought a mountain home on the Gallinas River near Montezuma and equipped it with a trapeze so that he could lift himself up and down from the bed. He had a neighbor, Felipe Peña, who would help him with things he could not manage himself. Despite his physical discomforts and pain, his interests were many, especially nature, sports, and music. He loved the outdoors, and enjoyed observing, with his telescope, the goats and wild life roaming around the mountains across from his cabin. Football and baseball were his favorite spectator sports. With Dr. Voda he spent many happy hours listening to records of classical music. (Mosimann 1967)*

Morris was appointed to the Supreme Court of the State of New Mexico by Governor Edwin L. Mechem. During his term on the Supreme Court he carried a heavy workload and rendered many opinions.

On 11 June 1986, former governor E. L. Mechem, the current Senior Judge, United States District Court, wrote:

*I can't think of anyone more entitled to recognition than Morris. He had an unbeatable spirit and an amazing sense of humor. I really wasn't acquainted with him until he came to the Legislature. It was, and is a grueling, grinding experience if you attend to business and he did, but he never missed any Session and always knew what was going on. He never vacillated and never backed off but he wanted the facts before he made a decision.*

*He had a quick, retentive and analytical mind. When the word drifted around that I was going to appoint him to the Supreme Court, Judge James B. McGee came over to the office to protest because he was positive that Morris couldn't take care of the work. I think he figured too that there had to be something wrong with Morris' head or sense of balance. After Morris went on the bench, I never heard anything from Judge McGee and I made a point of asking him how Morris was doing. He acted surprised that I would ask and said, "Oh, he is doing more than his share of the work!" Dick Modrall told me that Morris had asked if he could register with him to study in his office to prepare to take the bar, as was the practice for would-be lawyers who were not planning to go to law school. After Morris had been studying for a year, he told Dick he was going to Santa Fe to take the exam. Dick said he tried to talk him out of it as it can be difficult for applicants who have had three years of law school. Morris told him that he had already rented a hearse to take him to Santa Fe and he wanted to find out what he was up against. Dick was quite surprised that he passed and said he would have paid more attention to him if he had realized how well he studied.*

*I made two appointments to the Supreme Court, Morris and August T. (Joe) Seymour and they both were excellent contributions to the bench. (Mechem 1986)*

Morris was unsuccessful in the bid for re-election to the Supreme Court. The state lost the services of one who had exceptional analytical power and its sole Republican justice.

His close friend, A. A. "Tony" Sanchez, recalls a trip from Albuquerque with Morris when they were stopped by the police. Someone seeing Morris riding in the car, "as stiff as a board," thought Tony was transporting a dead body beside him in the car, and had reported it to the police. The state policeman who stopped them was J. D. Maes, who knew both Tony and Morris, and they all had a hearty laugh. Morris often told the story, as he thought it was hilarious.

Morris was a member of the San Miguel County, New Mexico State and American Bar Association. He served as the Las Vegas City Attorney from 1956 to 1958.

He served as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the First Presbyterian Church. He was attorney for The Las Vegas Hospital and served on the hospital board. He never charged a fee for services to charitable entities.

Eleanor Wald worked part-time for Morris Shillinglaw in the summer of 1948, and again beginning in 1954. Among the clients he served was Matie R. Viles. He served her from January 1961 until his death on February 12, 1963. Eleanor served as executor of the Estate of Matie R. Viles, and Morris served as estate attorney.

She recalled:

*Morris Shillinglaw, Jr. was a highly intelligent man who practiced his chosen profession of law as a service to those who chose to be his clients. He was careful to determine exactly what a client wished to accomplish, and in every case, applied his knowledge of the law diligently and energetically to provide the action and documents to fulfill the client's needs. To Mr. Shillinglaw, the law provides the structure within which people can live and act in a way to provide peace and harmony. This was the attitude that he brought to every case.*

*He listened, he counseled, he researched. His logic and sense of humor kept even the most touchy relationships pretty much under control, and most often the conclusion of a situation exceeded the client's expectations.*

*The Shillinglaw law practice specialized in land titles, estate planning and probate. This kind of practice requires a great deal of study, not only to determine precedent, but also to keep up with the trends. In these areas, Morris Shillinglaw was a diligent scholar.*

*A client could know that all known sources would be used to produce a document that would accomplish the required action. The principals in most cases went their way with friends and relatives, returning only when a new need arose. The George Viles and Matie R. Viles estates were an exception. When George Viles knew that he was suffering what seemed to be his final illness, he brought his Will and an outline of his affairs to Mr. Shillinglaw. Matie R. Viles, his wife, had little understanding of the business which George might be leaving. When George Viles passed away, Matie Viles did consult Morris Shillinglaw as Mr. Viles had instructed her to do. Mr. Shillinglaw acted as counselor, trust officer, and estate planner for Mrs. Viles. She knew how she wished to live and what she wanted to accomplish. She quietly and in private marveled at the skills Mr. Shillinglaw used to provide the results she wanted. Mrs. Viles spent many months with Mr. Shillinglaw in the process of developing the Viles Foundation, a corporation supported by the Matie R. Viles Trust. The Foundation's purpose is to "provide educational opportunities for young people of Mora and San Miguel Counties (New Mexico) with emphasis upon orphan or fatherless or motherless girls."*

*The Foundation was incorporated under the laws of the State of New Mexico on 26 March 1959 and will celebrate its 42<sup>nd</sup> year of successful operation in 2001. Following is a part of the memorial statement inserted into the minutes of the 20 April 1963, meeting of the Foundation:*



*Mr. Shillinglaw served for many years as legal advisor to Matie R. Viles, founder of the Viles Foundation. It was through his insight and legal skill that Mrs. Viles was able to set up an organization through which she could use her resources to accomplish the ends she most desired.*

*The Viles Foundation is a memorial to the Viles family and to Mr. Shillinglaw. (Wald 1994)*

**Mrs. Frances Shipe recalls Morris' later life:**

*Morris was President of the Kiwanis Club and Lt. Governor of the Southwest District of Kiwanis. He was elected without a dissenting vote. I think the people took the attitude if Morris could do it they should be able to do more.*

*He had his own cabin built up in the Gallinas Canyon. It was a beautiful house, and he insisted on growing flowers. He was able to attend to them. Of course, everything had to be a special height. He wasn't allowed to keep beer at home with his folks. But he had beer at his cabin. On Sunday afternoons his dad would come to take him back to town, so he could go back to work. He told me one time there was one can of beer left in the refrigerator and he was going to drink it before his dad came for him. He dropped it, and it landed straight up, and started spewing. I asked him what he did. He said, "I just stood there and licked as fast as I could." It wasn't very long after you had been around him before you overlooked any physical deformity, because of his personality and his humor.*

*His characteristics were:*

**Patience.** *With everything except injustice. He had no tolerance for injustice.*

**Courage.** *All who knew him recognized his courage.*

**Self-effacing.** *He was very modest. During the war The War Department gave him a medal for something, and I never found out what he did, but he didn't think it was very important. He sent the medal back to them. He said what he did was only a small contribution, and he didn't deserve it.*

**Uncomplaining.** *I don't know how many people he cured of complaining. He sure cured me. Anytime I think about a complaint, I realize what it would be like to be in his shape.*

**Always cheerful.** *Always had something funny to say. He didn't take very many criminal cases. One time he called me at home, and said he had a criminal case and that his dad was going to take him over to the courthouse and then his client would bring him back. Later he called and said that I should come to get him. I said, "OK, what happened." He said "I lost the case, and the client is in jail."*

*He preferred to walk the two blocks back and forth to work, and sometimes he went around by Murphey's Drug Store which was about a block further. I knew it would take longer because everybody would come out and visit with Morris along the way. Sometimes he would get an important phone call, or a client would come in, and I would start hunting for him. I would start calling stores to find out which direction he was going. I would say, "You know for someone who does not move any faster than you do, you are the hardest person I ever had to keep up with."*

**Such a delight.** *He was such a delight to work with. I learned so much. I had to do his research as he was not able to go up to the court library, and I was having to go to the court house to have papers signed by the Judge, the clerk and the other offices. I really had a liberal education working for Morris. (Shipe 1986)*

Morris died of influenza on 12 February 1963—Lincoln's birthday. It was an appropriate day for a strong Republican to depart.

Dale B. Gerdeman 1994

## OWEN HENRY SHILLINGLAW

***One year younger than his brother Morris, Owen Shillinglaw was seriously crippled with arthritis by the time he was 10 years old and blind during most of his adult years. A dedicated friend and Church member, he was also a successful business man and civic leader. Owen was honored as Las Vegas' Most Distinguished Citizen.***



**Owen H. & Deborah Mills**

Owen Henry Shillinglaw was born 29 December 1910 in Las Vegas, New Mexico, to William M. Shillinglaw Sr. and Gertrude Nenno Shillinglaw. He graduated from Las Vegas High School in 1929. He also attended Highlands University.

Owen was twelve when his father and Dr. F. H. Crail took him in a wheel chair to Mayo's Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota; his arthritic knees had frozen so that he could only sit, not stand or walk. To the day of his death, tears welled in his eyes when he spoke of Mayo's verdict: "He'll never walk again." Dr. Crail responded, "Come on, Owen, we'll show them." At home the legs were fastened to hinged boards, the frozen joints forcibly broken loose, and then Owen was put on a bicycle to maintain mobility; and, sure enough, he was on his feet until his death at age forty-six. The doctors at Mayo's told Dr. Crail that they did not think Owen would live to be twenty-one.

It was partly due to poor planning and insufficient counseling by Mayo's Clinic that Owen lost his sight. He had his wisdom teeth removed at the clinic, went on to visit family in Iowa, and developed an infection that cost him the sight of one eye and reduced the vision in the remaining eye to about ten percent.

In 1938 with the help of a close friend, Tom G. Rodgers, he bought a pioneer Las Vegas firm that had closed, the New Mexico Fuel and Lumber Company. He renamed it the Owen Shillinglaw Fuel Company. In 1950 he married Mrs. Deborah Mills Gordon of Claremore, Oklahoma, who also had spent her childhood in Las Vegas.

In 1986 she wrote the following anecdotes about their life:

*My real contribution to our lives together, for those all-too-brief years, was to free Owen, to make him more independent to do the things he wanted to do. He said of Rotary membership that he found out that Rotarians were as willing as I was to cut his meat for him, and that they weren't even as fussy as I was about whose fork they used!*

*Once we participated in a Rotary chain to transport a disadvantaged child from Raton to a summer camp. As we were returning from Santa Rosa, where another Rotarian took over, Owen commented to me that he, too, had been a disabled child, but that he had never realized that he was one! He and I also enjoyed numerous district and international Rotary conventions--1955 at Chicago, 1957 in Philadelphia, and 1958 in Dallas.*

*Owen possessed a power of charm and personality that made him beloved by all who were close enough to him to really know him. Some of my friends who met Owen only briefly spoke to me of how that meeting inspired them to reassess their values of life; to realize that those of us whose handicaps are hidden under a "normal" exterior must try harder to accomplish worthwhile goals.*

*Thousands of possible family arguments were settled for me early in my marriage. Some friends drove us up into Holy Ghost Canyon above Cowles. I still wasn't sure exactly how much Owen could see, so when I spotted a survey marker, I stood on it as I asked, "How high are we here?" He gave the elevation that checked out to within five or ten feet of the figure on the marker! And it only illustrates the quality of his mental powers when he explained: "We entered the aspens x minutes ago, we traveled up a five percent grade at a speed of x miles per hour. It just had to be that!" He was using his Braille watch, his knowledge of the plant zones, his awareness of the car speed and the road grade, and his computer-like accuracy in calculation.*

*It was funny that even as I was aware of Owen's handicaps, my confidence in him was so great that I didn't feel it necessary to lock the house at night, and when we were prowling around the country roads that had almost no sign of tire marks since the last rain, I was sure he'd get us safely home, even if I was completely lost.*

*His talent for friendship and zest for life involved us in getting his high school class of 1929 together for their 25th reunion. Many of his friends made a special effort just to see him at that time. Owen's 1929 classmates called him "Doc," partly because he was ambitious to become a doctor, but also because of some experiment in the biology lab that involved caponizing a rooster.*

*He had the telephone book memorized. When the dial system was installed in 1957, he was doubly troubled. Now he would become twice dependent on others, first to look up the changed numbers, and then to try to dial them with his arthritic fingers. He solved one part of the problem by having us put a loop of string in the (5) so that he could find the numbers. And his self-confidence was bolstered by my misfortune on the Sunday morning that the new system went into effect. He had me dial his brother, Morris, who was at the cottage for the week-end. When I reached the fire department, Owen declared, "Even a blind man could do better than that!" If I had been smart enough to plan it all out, I could not have done more to make him sure he could manage!*

*At the office, as we stuffed the monthly bills, we read to him the name, address, and amount, and he often called in Dad or Dorothy Puquette, the bookkeeper to correct some mistake.*

*His ear and memory for voices was uncanny. Once a con man who had gotten a donation the year before came back to try again with a different story and*

*Owen had the people in the outer office continue the conversation until the police arrived in response to his call.*

*Once when he was remodeling the office at the fuel company he was the only one who could "see" the water pipe installations on the blue prints--and that just before the connections were buried in the newly poured concrete floor.*

*Several times Owen would have me go with him to some basement where there was a furnace installation problem. He would find a perch near the workman in charge--Soderberg, Stuart Nelson, or one of his "boys"--Joe or Archie--and have me read the instructions aloud to him (hoping the workman was listening.) Almost always the difficulty was cleared up.*

*There was a coal strike in 1956 or 1957 and the State Hospital coal bins were nearly empty. Owen recalled that in the Santa Fe yards near the station there was a siding used by coal cars loading the tenders of the old coal locomotives. Coal had been spilled there over the years, enough so that those tracks had been repeatedly raised. He got permission to "mine" that area and salvaged enough stoker coal to keep the hospital inmates warm until the strike ended.*

*He was very active in civic affairs over the years and, at the time of his death, was a member and director of the Chamber of Commerce, member and director of the United Fund, and president of the Las Vegas "Shortline" Railroad. He was a member of Rotary and had served as President in 1956. He had served on the state board of the Girl Scouts, and belonged to the State Chapter of the National Arthritis and Rheumatism Foundation. He was on the local boards of the Boy Scouts and Red Cross. He had served as vice president of the New Mexico State Chapter of the Federation of the Blind.*

*He was a member of the First Presbyterian Church, where he had served as trustee and elder, as well as being active in the Presbyterian Men's Club. Owen's visual handicap precluded his participation in many of the church and Sunday school activities except as a part of the congregation or class, but his attendance was as perfect as his health allowed.*

*In addition to Owen's integrity, courage, and resourcefulness, he had the gift of a marvelous sense of humor. Life around him was always an adventure and he always saw its best, and often its funniest side.*

Walter Vivian, the *Las Vegas Daily Optic* editor and a family friend, wrote a letter to the family a portion of which reads:

#### *A TRIBUTE TO COURAGE*

*Owen Shillinglaw died today, and Las Vegas lost a remarkable citizen. Owen was a symbol of what many men lack--courage. The ability to meet adversity with a determination to conquer was an integral part of Owen's inheritance... He was determined to be independent and surmount the odds which he faced. Las Vegas was Owen Shillinglaw's town. His world, his work, and his worry were Las Vegas. Las Vegas belonged to Owen more surely than it belonged to anyone else...gave it everything... took little...left it two small shoes that will be the biggest to try to fill...the shoes of a person it was a privilege to know and love. (Las Vegas Daily Optic Sept. 26, 1958)*

Life-long friend and fellow Rotarian, Ed Comstock, wrote a eulogy that was delivered to a combined Rotary and United Fund memorial. It was a gentle tribute of a sincere friend and portions of it read:

*The community will not be the same without him. He was a man of warm and generous nature, of unyielding fidelity to his convictions of right and wrong...he leaves behind the legacy of his example for our instruction, our encouragement and our emulation...Let us hope when that hour shall come, it shall find us ready to answer the call with as little fear as did Owen...He believed in the universal order of nature and that death is simply one of its phases...Having discharged with fidelity his duty to his fellow man and having done upon earth what his feeble and crippled hands found to do, he was ready to face the future with as calm a confidence as when, at evening, one lies down to pleasant dreams and awaits the dawning of another day. "Service Above Self" were no unmeaning terms to Owen. He had met and conquered the challenge of the Rotary's "Four-Way Test" all through his life. We thank God for him. (Las Vegas Daily Optic Oct. 1, 1958)*

His obituary reads:

*We'll miss Owen but we won't cry because that is the way he would have had us accept his death. Struck with a crippling disease, blind at the last, he never-the-less carried on in an exceptional manner his business and other civic activity. Over the years, despite a great handicap, he forced people to admire and respect rather than feel sorry for him.*

*Always in the forefront of any activity that would make Las Vegas a better place to live, he worked hard to make others see the challenge of the times that confronted Las Vegas.*

*His was a life of service to others...always ready to help...always ready to pitch right in and do a portion of the work...so much so that it is difficult to recount the organizations and civic endeavors in which he participated.*

*He shamed many of us who were his co-workers in some civic enterprises, as he ceaselessly accepted added responsibility and duties...he could always be counted on. (Las Vegas Daily Optic Sept. 26, 1958)*

Owen Shillinglaw fell at his place of business on September 13<sup>th</sup>. First hospitalized in Las Vegas, he was later transferred to an Albuquerque hospital. He died from an apparent lingering heart condition on 19 September 1958. Older brother Morris died five years later in February 1963.

Deborah M. Shillinglaw and Dale B. Gerdeman 1987

### **Sources:**

*Albuquerque Journal*, Sept. 22; Sept. 25, 1958.

Comstock, Edward S., Tribute delivered before Rotary and United Fund.

*Las Vegas Daily Optic*, Sept. 26; Sept. 29; Oct. 1, 1958.

Shillinglaw, Deborah M., correspondence.

Vivian, Walter, letter to the family.

## DEBORAH MILLS SHILLINGLAW

***Deborah Mills Shillinglaw was an active member of the Church, a dedicated teacher, and an important contributor to this volume.***

Deborah Felker Mills was born 9 August 1909 in the house built by her parents at 916 Sixth Street, Las Vegas, New Mexico. Her parents were William Porter Mills, M.D. and Gertrude Mabel Bayless. Dr. Mills served as superintendent of the New Mexico State Hospital in Las Vegas from 1912 until he volunteered for service in the Medical Corps in World War I.

The family settled in Oklahoma in 1917. Deborah graduated as valedictorian from Claremore High School, then earned an Associate of Art degree at Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri. She taught for one year in Claremore, Oklahoma. She continued her education earning a B.S. in Education and an M.A. in English from the University of Missouri at Columbia. She also took graduate classes at New Mexico Highlands University in Las Vegas, New Mexico, and the University of Nevada in Las Vegas.

Deborah married Frederick Gordon of Columbia, Missouri, in 1928 and was divorced in 1949.

Deborah's teaching career brought her back to Las Vegas in 1949. In 1950 she met and married Owen Shillinglaw.

Deborah attended Sunday school at both the First Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas, New Mexico and Claremore, Oklahoma. She had a teaching career totaling 33 years in Oklahoma, Missouri, New Mexico and Nevada.

She taught Sunday school and Bible school in Las Vegas. She was active in the Women's Association, became a Red Cross nurse's aide and a board member at the Las Vegas Hospital. She was also active in the General Federation of Women's Clubs and was president of Sorosis and the Santa Fe Synodical Society. In 1961 she became a member of the First United Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas, Nevada.

After Owen's death in 1958 she was ordained as a ruling elder of the First Presbyterian Church and was a member of Delta Kappa Gamma, an honorary women teachers' society. She was a member of Phi Theta Kappa and Pi Lambda Theta, honor societies, and president of several of the local societies of these organizations.

Because her mother moved to Las Vegas, Nevada, in 1961 Deborah joined her mother and sister there to finish her teaching career. After her retirement in 1975 she continued her life-long interests in education by becoming a tutor for Laubach Literacy in Action and supervising tutor-trainer for their organization. She also worked as a humanities teacher at the Las Vegas (Nevada) Senior



Center and the Charleston Residential Hotel Nevada Teachers Association, the Southern Nevada Teachers of English Association.

Deborah enjoyed travel and saw all but one of the fifty states; she spent three summers on waterways around Ontario, Canada and traveled in Mexico border towns. Her European stops included Finland, Scandinavia, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, the British Isles and Greece, Scotland and Wales.

Deborah died in Las Vegas, Nevada, on April 2, 2001. She was buried in the Masonic Cemetery in Las Vegas, New Mexico, next to her husband Owen Shillinglaw. Deborah is survived by one daughter Patricia Lafferty of Las Vegas, Nevada, two grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Deborah M. Shillinglaw, Robin Carlson, Patricia Lafferty and Dale B. Gerdeman 2001

## LYMAN AND GLADYS CHAPMAN

***Lyman and Gladys Chapman, active members of the First Presbyterian Church, wrote this autobiography in 1986. The Church has Lyman and his stalwart helpers to thank for its distinctive metal roof.***

Lyman Chapman was born on 12 May 1911 in Edgar, Wisconsin, the son of Walter Lewis Chapman and Minnie B. Shanklin. He has one sister and one brother living. One sister and six brothers are deceased.

He was married to Florence Schedcik on 13 October 1931. They had one son and three daughters. Florence passed away in 1944. Lyman married Gladys Alcorn on 10 February 1945 and they had one daughter.



Gladys Alcorn Chapman was born on 17 October 1926 in Cincinnati, Ohio, the daughter of Guy Alcorn and Louise Carter. She has one brother.

Lyman was construction superintendent for Hesselden Construction of Albuquerque for 17 years. He supervised construction of buildings all over the state of New Mexico.

The Chapmans were members of the First Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas for about 10 years. Lyman was an elder and chairman of the trustees for several years. He did a lot of maintenance, remodeling and redecorating on the church, manse, cottage and old mission buildings. He supervised many of the Presbyterian youth work camps that came to Las Vegas for a

**Lyman & Gladys** week during the summer months to do repair and maintenance on church properties. He had the knowledge, will and vigor needed to improve the condition of church properties.

Gladys was church treasurer for three years and very active in United Presbyterian Women. She also served as chairman or member on such committees as interpretation and support and the bazaar. She served more than three hundred hours as a volunteer for the hospital auxiliary.

They each received an honorary membership to the Program Agency from the United Presbyterian Women on 23 November 1980. The couple shared a hobby of making and selling wooden gift items. Some of the items, such as offering plates, candle holders, toys, etc., were given to the Church.

The Chapmans moved to Deming in November 1983, and were members of the First Presbyterian Church and active in the Masons.

Lyman and Gladys Chapman 1986

Editor's note: Lyman Chapman passed away on 27 February 2002.

## ANTONIO A. SÁNCHEZ

***Tony Sánchez was recognized statewide as a vital member of the Las Vegas community in both official and unofficial capacities. He was active in both business and ranching. He was also a loyal supporter of the church.***

Antonio A. "Tony" Sánchez was born 18 October 1911 in Las Vegas, New Mexico, to Manuel A. Sánchez and Chrestina Laumbach Sánchez. He was the oldest of two children. His sister Adelina was born in February 1913 and died in February 1920.

Tony was named after his grandfather, Antonio A. Sánchez, who in 1878 with his son, Manuel, moved from Rociada to Sabinoso, New Mexico, in the eastern part of San Miguel County to continue the retail grocery, clothing and hardware business previously established in Rociada. Sabinosa is about 65 miles East of Las Vegas at the intersection of State Road 419 and the Canadian River in San Miguel County.



spent Training School from first grade through high school. He attended New Mexico Normal University, now Highlands University, then gave up formal education; as he said, "That's when I decided I'd had enough book learning if I was to be a nurse-maid to a bunch of cows." He learned the ranching business from his father, who died in 1941.

There were many settlers in the Sabinoso area in the late 1800s who obtained 20 acre homestead tracts. Gradually, the settlers surrendered to the harshness of the land and packed up their belongings to move on to an easier subsistence, and the Sánchezes bought up the homesteads. In 1904 Sabinoso was subjected to a flood that is still the most legendary of all in northeastern New Mexico. The flood prompted the Sánchezes to move out of the river valley to a creek-side parcel four miles south of Sabinoso. The Sánchezes built their big adobe home there, and that was where Tony lived. He later added separate living quarters with modern conveniences. Tony ran about 400 cows on his 23,000-acre ranch.

**Antonio A.**

In the early days, the area around Sabinoso had enough rainfall to support dry farming. Tony recalled a time when they made four cuttings of alfalfa during the summer. They raised many other feeds and grains corn, beans, milo maize, sorghum, etc. The menfolk of the area Sabinoso, Trementina, Trujillo and Mosquero would work a few

months of the year on the roundups of the nearby great Bell Ranch to get the money needed for other things but raised much of their own foodstuffs. As the rainfall decreased over the years the only area that continues to be farmed is limited to places where it is possible to irrigate and most of the small communities have been abandoned.

Tony recalled the "dust-bowl" years of 1933 and 1934 when the drought was so bad that cattle were starving all over the Southwest. The government stepped in with a program that paid \$4 for calves, \$12 for cows, and \$18 for an animal that had a little bit of flesh, and the cattle were slaughtered. The program paid very little but enabled the ranchers to hold on for a better day.

Tony remembered:

*The good years have pretty well balanced out the bad. In the last few years, things have become more and more difficult--government regulations, high taxes, scarcity of help, etc. Most of the younger people have moved to town, so it has become increasingly difficult to find and keep dependable help.*

Tony was a father figure to the many smaller ranchers of the area, helping them out with finances as well as lending a hand when they worked cattle.

Tony was elected to the New Mexico House of Representatives in 1952, serving for two years including serving as majority whip in 1953. He was vice chairman of the San Miguel Republican Party in 1952, chairman of the San Miguel County Republican Party central committee from 1952 to 1954 and was an alternate delegate to the 1952 and 1956 Republican national conventions.

He served on the State Fair Board in 1957 and 1958 and was appointed by Governor Edwin L. Mechem as the business manager of the State Hospital for 1956 and 1957. At the time of his death he was serving on the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service Board under the United States Department of Agriculture.

He was a founder and director of the Bank of New Mexico in Las Vegas. At the time of his death he was chairman of the board of the bank and director of the Northeastern Regional Hospital of Las Vegas. He was an active and contributing member of the La Plaza Vieja Partnership and was a well-known benefactor in the Las Vegas area, having helped many people to get started financially. He served on the Charles and Adele Ilfeld Foundation Board.

Tony's mother was a very active member of the First Presbyterian Church, and for many years never missed a Sunday. Tony seldom missed Sunday school and had many fond memories of Miss Louella Hays as his Sunday school teacher.

Tony joined the church by profession of faith on 26 April 1925. His work schedule at the ranch made it difficult for him to attend

Sunday services, but he remained a loyal supporter of the church. Those members who knew him appreciated the strength of his commitment to the Lord's work.

Tony remained unmarried, and his only relatives were cousins. He died on 11 March 1987.

Dale B. Gerdeman 1987

## OFENE AND CARLOTA GARCIA

***Ofene and Carlota Garcia served the Church in many ways throughout their busy lives. They also enjoyed entertaining the Presbyterian Women's Bible Study Group each June with a potluck lunch at their mountain home.***

Ofene Garcia was born in Chacon, N.M. August 28, 1914, the son of Lucio and Bersabe Garcia. Ofene attended the mission school in Chacon. He graduated from the Menaul High School in Albuquerque, NM. and attended New Mexico Normal University in Las Vegas, New Mexico.

Carlota Romero was born in Dixon, N.M. August 2, 1918. She was a child of the Presbyterian Church there and attended the Plaza mission school established and operated by the Church at Dixon. She is a descendant of one of the first native New Mexico ministers, Rev.



**Ofene & Carlota Garcia**

Tomas Atencio. She was the first girl to attend Menaul School in Albuquerque and graduated in 1937. Carlota went on to earn a degree in education from the University of New Mexico in 1941. New Mexico Highlands University awarded her a Masters degree in her field in 1963. Ofene oversaw adult education classes in Holman, New Mexico, in 1935. Carlota taught in the Plaza mission schools of Chacon in 1941 and Holman in 1942. They met at this time and were married on October 10,

1942 in Las Vegas. Two daughters, Juanita and Gloria were born to them while Ofene was serving in the United States Army and stationed in El Paso.

After his military service the couple returned to New Mexico and Ofene resumed his teaching career as principal at Guadalupita and then in Mora, while Carlota stayed home for a time to raise the girls. She taught both daughters to read before they were old enough to attend school. She was passionate about teaching, as was her husband.

Ofene served as elder in Presbyterian Churches in Chacon, in the Las Vegas Spanish Mission Church and the First Presbyterian Church on Douglas Avenue. He was delegate for the Church at Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly levels. He served on the Synod's Task Force for Minority Leadership Development. He and Carlota shared an interest in Presbytery's Committee on Hispanic and Native

American Concerns and attended meetings together. They were active in the Jicarita Cluster, a network of mountain churches, and Ofene served on the board of Camp Loma Verde, east of Taos, a property owned and maintained by the Cluster.

Ofene served as head of the mission school in Chacon between 1952 and 1954 and taught there as well. When Carlota resumed teaching, she served as kindergarten teacher there. They acquired a small parcel of land in Chacon and loved their cozy little house in that beautiful corner of God's creation. For a time, Ofene ran a few head of cattle.

At the mission school the curriculum was the same as at the public school. They used the same textbooks and materials. One exception was that the mission school used to teach passages from the Bible every day. The children enjoyed the Bible stories and learned Bible verses, too.

In 1956 the family moved to Las Vegas and joined the Presbyterian Church in Old Town. Later when the congregation moved to the Douglas Avenue Church, they moved, too. Ofene served as clerk of the Session in both churches for about 30 years.

For a time, Ofene taught Spanish in the West Las Vegas Schools. Carlota entered the public school system too, teaching at Paul D. Henry, Douglas Avenue, and Gallinas Elementary Schools. Ofene retired in 1975 having taught for forty years. Carlota retired in 1980.

As the couple's health began to fail, daughter Juanita, wife of Dan Lucero, took them to their home in Albuquerque to supervise their care. Carlota was hospitalized there and succumbed to kidney failure on January 30, 2002. Her memorial service took place at Second Presbyterian Church in Albuquerque on February 2, with Rev. Jaime Quinones officiating.

Dale B. Gerdeman 2002

### **Sources:**

Denis Solis, grandson, provided a brief history, shared by Rev. Jaime Quiones at the funeral service for Carlota

Rev. Henry Rodgers, Eulogy

*El Centenario de la Palabra* edited by Jane Atkins Grainger



## JOSE DOMINGO VASQUEZ, JR.

*"...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24:15*

Imagine a cold winter morning in a high Rocky Mountain valley in northern New Mexico. Five-foot high snowdrifts at an altitude of 8700 feet make travel almost impossible. In a small schoolhouse, two boys, having lit a wood-burning stove are playing basketball across a wooden floor in what would soon serve as their classroom and playground.



This mission school was a Protestant outpost that would fashion the lives of these boys. The boys would grow up to exemplify the church's values and precepts. They themselves, in later years, would serve schools and churches in various ways.

Jose D. Vasquez, my father, and Rev. Tomas Gonzalez were boyhood friends, reared in Chacón, New Mexico, a small rural community in northern New Mexico. They are separated in age by six months. Their responsibility each school morning was to arrive before their teachers and classmates to light the wood-burning stove that provided heat for the school building. Once they completed their task, they played their game of basketball.

The school at Chacón existed primarily through the efforts of two men, Rev. John Annin and Rev. José Yñés Perea. Rev. Annin, a Presbyterian missionary from New Jersey, had come to the frontier town of Las Vegas, New Mexico to found the first missionary church. Thirty-three miles from Chacón, Las Vegas was destined to become the center of commerce and politics in the region.

As a young man José Yñés Perea was an adventurer from a wealthy Bernalillo family. His family was Roman Catholic, but he changed his belief because of reading the Bible. Later ordained by the Presbyterian Church, he and Rev. Annin supervised the building of the Las Vegas Church that was completed in 1873. A separate preexisting building on the lot became the manse and school. The church and school in Las Vegas were situated on a knoll overlooking the town and became the well-spring for Chacón's Presbyterian school and church.

In 1879 the Chacón church was established by Manuel Sandoval. Rev. Annin and Rev. Perea visited and ministered in the Chacón area (called El Rito prior to the coming of the U.S. Post Office).

My father was born in 1917 to Jose Domingo and Nieves Vasquez, ranchers who resided further up the Chacón valley. Domingo

**Jose D. Jr. & Terécina**

Vasquez, Sr., as he was called, and his wife Nieves eventually converted to Presbyterianism and helped to furnish the church building. Jose D. Vasquez, Jr., was baptized in the Chacón Presbyterian Church by Rev. Gabino Rendon, the church's pastor.

From 1923 to 1930 my father attended the Presbyterian Day School in Chacón. In Dale Gerdeman's *Presbyterian Missionaries in Rural Northern New Mexico*, we find a reference to young Jose:

*...Henderica Van Hine wrote the following: Now we will have sentence prayers by Tomas, Celia, Lucy and Jose. The children are not timid, for do they not pray thus every Sunday evening in Junior Endeavor? As we listen to their prayers we are deeply impressed by the earnestness of voices and words. (Gerdeman 1999)*

During my father's school years, a trip to Las Vegas from Chacón would take three days by horse-drawn wagon. A decade and half later, the Las Vegas church would use the services of Jose Vasquez and Rev. Tomas Gonzalez.

To continue his education, my father had to leave Chacón and attend boarding school in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The Menaul Presbyterian High School, formerly part of the Las Vegas church, had been moved to Albuquerque in 1895. My father received his high school education there from 1930 to 1935. He was a member of the football team and the Glee Club. He said the hard physical labor of the fall harvest in Chacón prepared him for the fall football season at Menaul.

The young men of the Menaul Glee Club performed for the girl's Presbyterian boarding school in Santa Fe called the Allison-James School. There my father met Terecina Trujillo, the young woman who would become his wife.

In 1935 my father entered the University of New Mexico. He attended for four years and majored in biology and Spanish. Father's relationship with Menaul High School did not end with his graduation. The year following his graduation, Menaul employed my father as a dormitory monitor. He held that position until his graduation from the University in 1939. During those years he attended Presbyterian services at The Second Presbyterian Church in Albuquerque.

Now married, my father began his teaching career. During the next four years, he took various teaching positions in schools across the state. The family resided in Cimarron, Wagon Mound, Trementina, and San Jose, New Mexico.

World War II interrupted father's career as an educator. In 1943 the family moved to Deming, New Mexico, and in 1944 to Oakland, California, where my father was employed in war-related industry. He helped build Liberty Ships constructed in Oakland's Moore Shipyards and tested them in the waters of the San Francisco Bay. In 1945 he was drafted into military service. As he was returning his family to New Mexico, the war ended, and he was not required to serve.

1946 found the Vasquez family in Las Vegas, New Mexico, where the family home was established. Our parents, being great advocates of education, chose Las Vegas as their home in part because of the educational opportunities. Both received their master's degrees from New Mexico Highlands University in Las Vegas.

The original First Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas, established by Rev. Annin and José Yñés Perea and later called the Spanish Mission Presbyterian Church, became the family's home church. What characterized the church on Chavez Street in Las Vegas was its Spanish-speaking service. Rev. Frank Payas, a Spaniard by birth and former priest, was the pastor. Hymns were sung in Spanish and the sermon was always preached in Spanish.

The church itself has enormous character. Adobe walls with recessed windows surrounded the sanctuary. A wood-burning stove sat below the platform and provided heat for the worshipers. The steeple held an 831-pound bell shipped by rail and wagon from Troy, New York. The bell was rung by a rope in the vestibule. It was always a treat, as a boy, to be allowed to ring the bell for Sunday services.

Following Rev. Payas' retirement, my father's boyhood friend, now Rev. Tomas Gonzalez assumed the ministry. The Spanish-speaking tradition continued for a long period during Gonzalez' ministry but at some point it was decided that one sermon a month would be preached in English and the hymns would be sung in English as well. Services continued to be held in the historic church during this period. In 1959 Rev. Gonzalez resigned his pastorate in Las Vegas and moved his family to Indiana. The responsibility for the church fell upon the church families.

During their fourteen-year membership in the Las Vegas church, both my father and mother served in leadership capacities. Jose served as Sunday school Superintendent, Clerk of the Session and Treasurer of the Session. Both he and Terecina were members of the Session and church elders, and both served the maximum terms allowed, two terms of three years each.

In 1960 services in the old town Mission church were discontinued and the church congregation merged with the new town First Presbyterian Church on Douglas Avenue. My parents again served as members of the Session in the New Town Church. Again, each served for a period of 6 years in these capacities.

During these years, my father continued his career as an educator and as an administrator in the Las Vegas public schools. He began as a Spanish teacher first hired by the Las Vegas school system in 1946. Shortly after, he began teaching biology and was eventually promoted to Director of Science at Las Vegas High School. In 1959 he became principal of Castle Junior High School where he remained for 7 years. In 1966 he was hired by the district administration as Director of Curriculum for the East Las Vegas School District. Father was

Superintendent of Schools in Las Vegas from 1976 until he retired in 1978. My mother Terecina was a teacher in the Las Vegas public schools for many years.

My parents are currently members of the Mora Presbyterian Church. Here again they have each served for six years as Session members. My mother has served as Clerk of the Session, helps with the church music as organist and participates in the Women's organization.

Jose returned to Menaul High School as a member of the Board of Directors. He served in this capacity for six years. Both parents are active in the New Mexico Retired Teachers Association.

The ministry that began in Las Vegas in 1870 with Rev. Annin and José Yñés Perea continues to foster spiritual depth and understanding. The Vasquez family members continue to be part of the church family in their various communities. The First Presbyterian Church met the educational and spiritual needs of our rural family in northern New Mexico and gave us a faith that sustains us to this day.

The real legacy of the Vasquez family is the legacy of being brought into a Christian way of life. The Bible, the Church and prayer marked our family life. My parents had us know that these practices were gleaned from their parents. The Presbyterian Churches in Chacón, Albuquerque, Mora, East Las Vegas and the historic church on a knoll in West Las Vegas established and nurtured our faith. The Christian journey has given us, the Jose and Terecina Vasquez family, an unending source of God's love through both father's and mother's example.

Jose Domingo Vasquez III, 2001

## DALE BROOKE GERDEMAN

*During his lifetime Dale was a banker, realtor, pilot, genealogist, published writer, and inventor holding three patents. He worked at the Bank of Las Vegas from 1946 to 1969, beginning as assistant cashier, then becoming vice president and president. He was a long-time member of the First Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas, joining at age 13 and serving the Church faithfully for 74 years as a member, deacon, and on many committees.*

*After retiring, Dale's favorite endeavor was to gather and write biographies of Presbyterian missionaries and of members, ministers and ministers' wives, starting with the first Presbyterians in Las Vegas in 1870.*



Dale Brooke Gerdeman was born to Alvin H. Gerdeman and Fern Brooke Gerdeman on 5 December 1917 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He moved with his parents to Las Vegas in 1918. He was the oldest of six children. One sister, Elizabeth Ann died at age 3. Another sister, Mary Jo McClure, died in Topeka, Kansas in 1993. He has two brothers, William A. Gerdeman of Grand Junction, Colorado, and James M. Gerdeman of Lubbock, Texas. His sister, Donna Jean Hays, lives in Las Vegas.

Dale married Glenda Davison on 24 October 1948 in the First Presbyterian Church in Pampa, Texas. Dale and Glenda made Las Vegas their home and raised two daughters, Diane Louise Gerdeman Peters, (b. 4 October 1949) and Ellen Rae Gerdeman Klein (b. 7

January 1952). They have two grandchildren, Scott Christopher Silva (b. 25 November 1972) and Kara Brooke Ashcraft (b. 30 July 1975); and two great-grandchildren, Brooke Emily Ashcraft (b. 5 October 2002) and Cole Matthew Ashcraft (b. 1 April 2005).

**Dale Brooke &  
Glenda Davison**

Dale joined the First Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas on 1 July 1930. He was a deacon from 1950 to 1953. He was elected to the Board of Elders in January 1954 and served as President of Board of Trustees for several years. The Presbyterian Church USA had two major fund-raising activities. Dale was chairman of the Las Vegas Major Mission and co-chairman of the Las Vegas 50 Million Fund. In 1982 Dale was chairman of the Pastor Search Committee. From 1986 to 1997 he served as Chairman of the Historical Committee. He served as recreation director of the Vacation Bible School for three years including 1987.

From about 1984 to 1989 Dale was a member of the Peacemaking Committee of the First Presbyterian Church. In about 1990, he was Chairman of the Christian Education Committee of the First Presbyterian Church. In 1990 the United Presbyterian Women of Las Vegas made him an honorary life member of their organization

Dale graduated in 1935 from Las Vegas High School where he was a member of National Honor Society. He was manager of the athletic teams in 1934 and 1935. In 1937 he graduated from New Mexico Military Institute, a junior college. He attended University of Illinois in 1937 and 1938 and was a member of the Phi Kappa Psi social fraternity. In 1940 he graduated from New Mexico Normal University (now New Mexico Highlands University) with a major in chemistry and minors in mathematics and education. He was a member of Alpha Phi Sigma, National Honor Scholastic Fraternity, and Kappa Theta social fraternity.

Dale worked for the New Mexico Employment Security Commission in 1941, and in 1942 he worked for the M. M. Sundt Construction Company in the payroll department while it was building Camp Luna, a military post near Las Vegas.

He served in the United States Army from November 1942 until March 1946. While in the service, he completed the Advanced Phase Engineering course at Oklahoma A & M.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s Dale was a member of the Leonard Hoskins Post #24, The American Legion, and was Chairman of the Land Development Committee. He is a life member of the Disabled American Veterans.

In 1946 he went to work for The Bank of Las Vegas (formerly the Las Vegas Savings Bank) as assistant cashier. In 1951 he was promoted to vice president. In January 1960 he was elected president in which position he served until December 1969, when the family sold its interest in the bank. While working in the bank he continued his education through extension courses. In 1961 he graduated from Southwestern Graduate School of Banking at Southern Methodist University, "with distinction." He graduated in 1968 from Senior Bank Officers Seminar, Graduate School of Business Administration at Harvard University.

Dale was Chairman of Groups II and IV of the New Mexico Bankers Association during the 1960s. In 1967 and 1968 he was a member of the executive committee of the New Mexico Bankers Association. He also served the Bankers Association as a member of the Legislative Committee and chairman of the student loan committee. Dale left the Bank of Las Vegas in December 1969. He was listed in *Who's Who in the Southwest* during his career as president of The Bank of Las Vegas.

He became a realtor in 1970 and worked in that field until 1980. He was elected president of the Las Vegas Board of Realtors in 1972 and 1975.

Dale was also active in the community. He was a member of the Advisory Council of the Board of Directors of Kit Carson Council Boy Scouts in the late 1940s. He was Neighborhood Commissioner of Boy Scout Troop #146 and Cub Scout Pack #146 in the late 1940s. In the late 1940s and early 1950s he was a member of the Cowboys' Reunion and Rodeo Association. In the late 1940s until about 1956 he served on the board of the Las Vegas Chapter March of Dimes and was treasurer several years and director in 1953 and 1955. In the 1950s Dale was treasurer and president of the Las Vegas Chapter of New Mexico Heart Association. During the 1950s he was a member of the executive committee of the New Mexico Heart Association. In 1952 he was elected vice president of the New Mexico Heart Association. In 1951-1952 Dale was Exalted Ruler of the BPOE Elks #408. Under his leadership, 85 new members were initiated, and the officers won the ritualistic team championship of New Mexico. In 1952 he was District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler, New Mexico North.

In 1958-1959 Governor Edwin L. Mechem appointed him to the New Mexico State Board of Educational Finance. He served on the Executive Committee. From 1951 until 1972 the Greater Las Vegas Child Health Center served needy grade-school students in Las Vegas. The organization provided fresh milk and vitamins daily to the students. Emergency health care including surgery was provided to those whose families that were unable to afford the procedure. At different times Dale served as treasurer, vice president and president of the organization.

In 1960 he was President of the Las Vegas San Miguel Chamber of Commerce. For several years he was treasurer of the Industrial Development Committee and a member of the Mining Committee.

From 1962 to 1981 Dale served on the Viles Foundation board. This foundation provides funds for higher education for orphans from San Miguel and Mora Counties. He served the foundation in the offices of treasurer and president.

From 1986 to 1992 he was on the advisory board of the Menaul Historical Library of Albuquerque and was chairman of the Oral History committee.

He has been a member of Las Vegas Rotary Club since 1970.

During the period of 1984 to 1994 he was president several times of the Las Vegas Genealogical Society. His aunts, uncles and grandparents had traced the lineage of both families back to the immigrants. With this valuable head start he has been able to identify about eleven hundred ancestors. This experience was useful training when he began his historical work on the members of the First Presbyterian Church.

Dale's beloved wife Glenda passed away in December 2003. In 2004 he moved to Chandler, Arizona to be close to his daughters, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He passed away peacefully surrounded by his family in January 2009.

Dale B. Gerdeman 1997 and Ellen Gerdeman-Klein 2009



## **GLENDRA RAE DAVISON GERDEMAN**

***Glenda was an active member of the First Presbyterian Church and patiently accepted Dale's many hours of civic work on almost one hundred biographies for the Church.***

Glenda Rae Davison was born on 24 October 1926 in Kingfisher County, Oklahoma on the Stalder family farm. Her parents were Robert Loyd Davison and Josephine Ella Stalder Davison. She was the oldest of four sisters, Norma Jean Davison White, Shirley Ann Davison Willis and Sandra Sue Davison Thompson.

Glenda's father went to work for the Cabot Carbon Company in Skellytown, Texas, and moved the family there in 1933. Glenda attended nearby White Deer High, in White Deer, Texas, where she was active in sports, was a cheerleader and was voted "Most Popular" girl. After graduating, she worked for the Cabot Carbon Company in the laboratory in Pampa, Texas to save money for college.

In the summer of 1946 Glenda and her sister Jean came to Las Vegas to visit their aunt and uncle, Sada and Ben Renshaw. The Renshaws invited Glenda to live with them and suggested she enroll at New Mexico Highlands University. Glenda accepted their invitation and attended Highlands for two years, majoring in business. She worked part-time in the registrar's office and joined the Tri Sigma Sorority.

Glenda married Dale B. Gerdeman on 24 October 1948 in the First Presbyterian Church in Pampa, Texas. Dale and Glenda have two children, Diane Louise Gerdeman Peters, born 4 October 1949, and Ellen Rae Gerdeman Klein, born 7 January 1952. They have two grandchildren, Scott Silva and Kara Ashcraft, and four great-grandchildren, Brooke Emily Ashcraft, Cole Matthew Ashcraft, Sean Silva and Liam Silva.

Glenda was an active member of the First Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas. She served as an elder, as chairman of the Nominating Committee, and as a member of the Music and Worship committee. She joined the United Presbyterian Women, and was honored as a recipient of the Honorary Life Membership in the UPW. She taught Sunday school for several years, represented the Church as a member on the Las Vegas Hospital Auxiliary Board, and served as president of the board. She also did volunteer work at the Las Vegas Hospital.

Glenda served as executive secretary of the Viles Foundation Board from 1969 to 1974 and as hostess for the Board meetings from 1974 to 1981. The Viles Foundation was formed to assist young New Mexicans from San Miguel and Mora Counties with a college education. The grants are limited to orphan girls and fatherless or motherless girls. The Foundation was chartered in 1959 by Matie Viles, widow of George A. Viles. Mr. and Mrs. Viles owned the

Mountain View Ranch at Cowles on the upper Pecos River for many years. George Viles was a director of the Bank of Las Vegas. Both George and Dale Gerdeman were directors at the same time for several years. George Viles died in 1951; Matie died 14 January 1961. During the years between 1959 and 1996, the Foundation made grants to about 400 students. (Source cited: Hmura, 1966)

Glenda was a longtime member of Chapter AC P.E.O. and served as president of the group. She passed away on 28 December 2003 at the age of 77.

Dale B. Gerdeman 2002 and Ellen Gerdeman-Klein 2007

## BILL AND FRANCIE MATHEWSON

***Bill, a medical doctor, was a charter diplomate of the American Board of Family Practice. Francie says one of the blessings of her life were the years she was choir director for the First Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas.***

Bill Mathewson was born in Coffeen, Illinois, 14 September 1917. He moved to Greenville, Illinois, where he started school and he lived there through high school and college. In 1938, while they were both in college in Greenville, he and Frances King were married.



**Bill & Francie Mathewson**

In the fall of 1941, a short time before the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Bill began medical school at the University of Illinois. The Army and Navy took over the medical schools in 1942, and Bill was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Navy. By then Brad was 2 years old and Ted was newborn. Due to the war, medical school was yearlong. Bill graduated on December 1944 and interned in the St. Louis City Hospital.

After his internship he was a resident in internal medicine at Hines VA Hospital, Chicago, Illinois, in 1946-47. He then practiced in Shelbyville, Illinois, for three years. While in Shelbyville the family joined the First Presbyterian Church.

Bill went to Pana, Illinois, in 1950 to join the Siegert Brothers Clinic in their practice there. It became the Siegert-Mathewson Clinic from 1952 to 1973. Wendy was born in 1949 and Mark in 1955 while in Pana.

Bill was recalled to the Navy during the Korean War. He was the doctor for four destroyers from 1952 to 1954. After his military service he returned to Pana and the Siegert-Mathewson Clinic.

He left Pana and private practice in August of 1973 and became the medical director of the Wisconsin Veterans Home, King, Wisconsin, from 1973 to 1978.

In January 1978 Bill came to Las Vegas to join the staff at the New Mexico State Hospital. In 1984, he retired and the family moved to Mountain Home, Arkansas. In 1991 Bill and Francie moved to Sherman, Illinois, to be closer to some of their children. Sherman is near Springfield.

Francie King was born 31 July 1919 in North Chili, New York. The family moved to Iowa, then to South Dakota and ultimately to Greenville, Illinois. Her father was a professor.

She married Bill Mathewson in 1938 and became a stay-at-home mom. She did volunteer work in the community and church. She was choir director as well as elder of the Pana Presbyterian Church for several years.

In Waupaca, Wisconsin, where they moved in 1973, she started a youth choir in the Lutheran Church.

On coming to Las Vegas in 1978, Francie with the help of many, most especially Elizabeth Bunch, started a choir. Bill and Francie joined the First Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas and have continued their membership. Their children were settled elsewhere and did not move to Las Vegas.

In 1984 when Bill retired it was a difficult goodbye--but getting closer to the family seemed important so they moved to Mountain Home, Arkansas. In 1991, another move to put them still closer to family territory brought them to Sherman, Illinois--near Springfield where Francie still resided in 1997. Bill passed away on 26 July 1997.

Francie Mathewson 1997

## JOSE A. "TONY" ESTRADA

*As loyal, active members, Tony and his wife Emma experienced many changes in the Presbyterian Church throughout their lives.*

Jose A. "Tony" Estrada was born in Trementina, New Mexico, on 12 July 1918 to Abelino Estrada and Irene Jaramillo Estrada. He was the oldest of four children, including Fedelina, Eva and Abelino "Sam" Estrada. All except Sam graduated from the Menaul School in Albuquerque. In 1928 their mother Irene died when Sam was only 14 days old. The children's aunt and uncle, Jose and Adela Estrada, helped Abelino raise the younger children. Tony, the oldest, was raised mostly by his dad and grandfather and grandmother-Julian Estrada Sr. and Gonzagita.

Tony graduated from the Menaul School in 1937 and attended New Mexico Normal University (now New Mexico Highlands University). He taught school until he joined the Army in 1942. In 1943 Tony married Emma Aragon Sanchez. He was in the service for 4-1/2 years and upon returning to New Mexico continued teaching for several years.



was Mexico State Hospital. After leaving that position he was named director of the Motor Vehicle Department for the State of New Mexico. While Tony was director of the MVD, the seat belt policy was introduced and later became law.

In 1984 the University of New Mexico awarded Tony a Certificate of Appreciation for being an outstanding leader of youth groups in the 4-H Club Program in San Miguel County. In 1987 Tierra & Montes Soil & Water Conservation awarded Tony a Certificate for Conservation Activities in the district.

Bureau, the New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau and the American Farm Bureau Federation. He was also a member of the Cattle Growers Association.

**Jose A. "Tony" & Emma S.** While in Trementina, Tony and many other members volunteered much time and effort at the Trementina Presbyterian Mission Church. A mission church requires a lot of work from volunteers.

Tony saw several changes in his life, such as the closing of the Trementina Church, which merged with the West Las Vegas (old town) Spanish Presbyterian Mission Church. Many of the Presbyterian

was

members who had attended the Trementina Mission Church moved away and joined other churches such as Baptist, Mennonite, etc.

In 1960 the West Las Vegas Spanish Presbyterian Mission Church was no longer afforded a minister by the Board of National Missions, so a majority of its members moved to the First United Presbyterian Church in East Las Vegas. In 1960 Tony was ordained an elder on the first Session of the newly merged churches.

Tony and Emma have three children: Perla Irene married Anthony Romero and has two children. Dan married Lillian Chavez and has three boys. Phillip married Carol Abeyta and has two boys.

After retirement, Tony began working full time as a rancher. He always felt it was a blessing to be able to live close to nature, which offers peace, happiness and contentment.

Tony Estrada died at age 77 on 4 November 1995.

Emma S. Estrada 1997

## EMMA S. ESTRADA

***Emma Estrada joined the First Presbyterian Church around six years after her marriage to Tony; she always felt a family should worship together.***

Emma was born 8 January 1920 to Seferino Aragon and Ignacia Sanchez Aragon in Trementina, New Mexico. At the age of 9 months she went to live with her maternal grandparents Melecio and Virginia Sanchez. At that time the Sanchez children were all married, and they raised Emma as though she were their real daughter.

At the age of 5 Emma attended Douglas School one-half days. In 1937 she graduated from Immaculate Conception High School in Las Vegas. In 1937 she enrolled for summer classes at New Mexico Highlands University. Tony graduated that same year from the Menaul School in Albuquerque. Tony and Emma met while they were attending Highlands University. Although their families lived only three miles from each other, they had never met because Emma was attending school in Las Vegas and Tony was in school in Albuquerque.

Emma's first year of teaching was at St. Anne's Catholic School in Tucumcari, New Mexico. She taught school for several years in San Miguel County. Tony joined the Army in 1942 and they were married in 1943. Emma and Tony were able to stay together during his military career. She was employed in service posts wherever he was assigned. Upon returning home after Tony's discharge from the service both went back to teaching for a number of years.

In 1974, Emma was called to serve on the Governor's Council of Economic Advisors until 1978. While a member of the Council, she chaired the Committee on Environmental Aspects of Economic Progress for the State of New Mexico. The duties of the Council were wide and varied. Emma retired in 1982 from the Department of Social Work at New Mexico Highlands University.

Tony and Emma have three children: Perla, Dan and Phillip. Perla and Dan graduated from Menaul School and Phillip decided to stay in Las Vegas and graduate from Robertson High School. Dan and Phillip went to New Mexico State University and Perla to Beauty and Cosmetologist School in Albuquerque. Dan works for New Mexico State Land Office as a land use specialist. Phillip works for the New Mexico Highway Department as a surveyor. Perla owns her own beauty shop.

Emma has been very active in the church serving in the following capacities:

|      |  |
|------|--|
| 1958 | Chairman - Evening Presbyterian Women's Circle |
|------|--|

1971 Nominating Committee  
 1971-1976 Taught Spanish in Action one night a week.  
 Many community businesspeople were enrolled in this class, all wanting to learn better communication skills for their Spanish speaking clientele. Some were medical doctors, a Human Service Director, church members, etc. At one time the class was big enough for two teachers and Mary Padilla, who occasionally interpreted for the courts volunteered as a helper.

1975-1978 Elder of the Church  
 1975 Chairman of Music and Worship Committee  
 1976-1977 Chairman - Mission Work in Church  
 1982 Member of Pastor search committee  
 1987-1989 Chairman - Nominating committee  
 1988-1990 Elder - class of 1991  
 1991-1992 Chairman - Personnel committee  
 1992 Worked with Rev. and Mrs. Cascante, missionaries from Costa Rica on English as a second language

1993 Member of I & S Committee  
 1994 Member - Personnel Committee  
 1996 Deacon - Class of 1999

For several years Emma was a member of the Prayer Group which met every Tuesday morning. They prayed about concerns of church members and for others requesting prayers.

Emma S. Estrada 1997



## ELIAS VALDEZ

***My lifelong involvement in the First Presbyterian Churches where I have belonged is a humble attempt to “pay back” as much as I can for that which has been done for me and those close to me.***

*Gratitude takes three forms:*

*a feeling in the heart,  
an expression in word,  
and a giving in return.*

*(Anonymous)*

My first contact with anything Presbyterian came at the age of five in 1926 when I was enrolled in kindergarten at the Agua Negra (Holman) Plaza Mission School. It was established by the Board of National Missions of the First Presbyterian Church USA. I never attended a public school until 1939 when I enrolled as a freshman at the University of New Mexico after spending twelve years in Presbyterian schools in Holman, Santa Fe and Albuquerque.

During my elementary schooling I was exposed not only to the required curriculum but also to the Bible. The former standard was imported and transmitted through the experience of the respective missionary teacher's background and training; the latter came straight from the morals of Scripture. I remember and remain grateful for the instruction imparted for the most part with kindness, patience and genuine interest, which started with the presence of these servants



of God. Later at both Allison-James School and Menaul School, we continued to study the Bible as a required subject for graduation. Obviously, this was a Board of National Missions mandate as was required attendance in church every Sunday. The continuous exposure to such guidance does not always result in membership in the First Presbyterian Church, but it happened to me.

As a high school sophomore at age 15, I joined the Second Presbyterian Church of Albuquerque, motivated primarily, I believe, by the teachings and expectations of those early teachers. Without their expectations our devotion may never have been realized. The teachers in the "plaza" schools were true

missionaries. I often think of Miss Annetta Bell, Miss Lela Weatherby, Miss Badger, Miss Edith Agnew and others who donated the prime of their lives to come to these isolated villages to teach and be of service to us who were then a small frontier segment of humanity.

**Elias & Estela** I graduated from Menaul School in 1939 and remained living at  
**“Micky” Valdez** Menaul as a "University Student," an additional opportunity extended

by the Board of National Missions to a select group of graduates. Without these opportunities made available by generous Presbyterians throughout the nation, I do not know how my life might have turned out. I am greatly indebted to the countless persons whose love of their God and church motivated them to support such a high educational mission that lasted more than a century.

I obtained a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of New Mexico in the spring of 1943. I enrolled in the Army Air Force immediately after and spent the next 3 1/4 years in service partly in Arabia and partly on the coast of West Africa, across from the Canary Islands, on a small enclave belonging to Spain at the time. Along with my regular duties as a communications operator I served as a translator for the Air Force in its contact with the Spanish military forces. I was discharged in August 1946.

I had met my wife Estela at Menaul School, and we married in 1943 prior to my enlistment. In October 1946, we decided to go to the Midwest with the intention of enrolling in graduate school at the University of Iowa. I enrolled in 1948 and completed a master's degree in organic chemistry in 1951. However, from 1946-48 before enrolling, we resided in a small community, Marion, a short distance north of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. We immediately affiliated with the Marion Presbyterian church where we became totally involved with all aspects of church life. Indeed, I still retain contact with individuals from that encounter.

It was at that time we included Estela's brother, Samuel Baez, in our family. We had only one son, Kenneth, at the time. Sam had already completed his high school sophomore year at Menaul, but Estela's immediate family had not yet recovered from the death of their mother some years before. The family was still in some disarray. Sam Báez, in later years, became a naval chaplain much to his credit and our delight. The benefits of training received at both Allison-James and Menaul in part and the continuous contact and support from caring members of First Presbyterian Churches where we were members, I am certain, helped him also to become a servant of God. Our proudest moment was his graduation from Princeton Seminary.

Later our lives were blessed with two additional offspring, Tim and Robin in addition to Kenneth, the oldest.

I began my career in Baraboo, WI, employed by an army contractor manufacturing small arms and propellant ammunition during the Korean War. I remained there for five years, not really coming to terms with the immorality of war and my related participation. However, my contacts with church activities increased and I became a member of Session. We left there in 1956.

I had made a friend during my studies at the University of Iowa. While I was in Baraboo, he had come to work for the Oscar Mayer Company in Madison, Wisconsin. He invited me to come to work with

and for him. The company was in the process of taking great strides in growing technically, integrating its own ideas of controlling the source of spice flavorings going into its meats. Having had training in organic chemistry fitted me well for pursuing such a specialty, and with other colleagues, the company achieved significant technological advantage by being able to expand the shelf life of their meat products and become national in distribution. This had been achieved by the technique of extraction and subsequent sterilization of the flavor extracts.

I left there after 3 1/2 years seeking to expand my knowledge of the extraction of spice flavorings. I affiliated with a company whose sole business was in the extraction of natural flavorings and natural colors in Calamus, Michigan. Fifteen years later, I returned to the Oscar Mayer Company which again was expanding. I brought my experience gained in extraction technology to Oscar Mayer in 1975. By then, the company had become a subsidiary of General Foods of White Plains, New York.

Just prior to my retirement in 1987 General Foods and all its subsidiaries along with Kraft became the property of the Philip Morris Company. During these intervening years I had maintained my involvement with the First Presbyterian Church wherever we lived, serving as church school teacher and being a member of Sessions and such duties as are associated with church life.

My membership in the United Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas was from January 1990 through 1996. During the interim, I served as a member of the I&S Committee of Sessions and as Clerk of Session in the Class of 1994. I was a commissioner to the Presbytery of Santa Fe during those three years.

In 1996, I was elected to the Presbytery Council as vice-chair and member-at-large. I represented the Presbytery as elder commissioner at the 209th General Assembly in Syracuse, New York, in 1997. I served as vice-moderator of the Presbytery of Santa Fe in 1998 and moderator in 1999.

My greatest satisfaction aside from being involved with church life has been my continuous engagement with the Manual School. I have served on the Board of Trustees for five years. After a hiatus of one year I am once again involved on the Board. Because of significant changes now taking place in the life of the school and the tremendous potential envisioned in its current development, I hope to soon see Manual School become a first-class institution. Moreover, its steps are in cadence with those of the First Presbyterian Church and its emphases on education. This is the vision upon which one stakes one's effort and ultimate hope. I would like to accomplish the goal of increasing the number of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado students attending and graduating from Manual School with a first-

class education. I relish the tremendous challenge that should command our attention, a target of the beyond, but still in plain sight.

In hindsight, I am proud that all the training received through the mission schools equipped me to achieve what I did, not only in my secular career, but also in my journey of Christian faith. To that end, I have found to whom I belong. Beyond that, judgment belongs in the hands of God.

Elias Valdez 1997

## **ESTELA ELIZABETH BAEZ DE VALDEZ ("MICKY")**

***Estela was a very loving person, not only to her family but also to her colleagues in school as well as her church family. Every single student teacher she had over the years remained her friend to the day she died 19 October 1990.***

*Abundance in life is...  
God's gift to us...!*

Estela Elizabeth Baez de Valdez was born 7 October 1921 in Mexico City, the daughter of the late Rev. Alfonso Baez, Sr. and the late Teresa Baez. Estela (Micky) was their firstborn.

Her father was a Presbyterian minister, a graduate of McCormick Seminary in Chicago. His first church in this country was in Gary, Indiana. The family then moved to several cities, among them El Paso, Colorado Springs, Pueblo, Phoenix, and Redlands.

Estela graduated from Menaul School in Albuquerque in 1941 and attended the University of New Mexico for two years. She met her husband, Elias Valdez, while they were both students at the University. They were married in 1943 just prior to Elias going into the service. After the war they moved to Iowa where Elias attended graduate school at the University of Iowa. He received his M.S. in chemistry in 1951.

Later they lived in Wisconsin, then Illinois, and in 1962 they moved to Michigan. Their three children were growing up meanwhile, and in 1964 Estela decided to return to school. She received a Bachelor of Science degree from Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo in 1967 and taught in Comstock, Michigan, for 10 years and in the Middleton School System in Cross Plains, Wisconsin, for another 10 years. Estela became a master teacher of language arts and learning centers, providing workshops for teachers who wanted to improve their skills at all elementary levels in these areas.

In 1987 Estela retired to Mora County, where Elias had grown up. During her lifetime she and Elias attended the First Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas.

When she passed away in 1990, she was survived by her husband Elias Valdez of Mora; children Kenneth Valdez, and Linda of Kalamazoo, Michigan, Timothy Valdez of Madison, Wisconsin, Rev. Robin Valdez of San Antonio, Texas; four grand children and two great-grandchildren. She is survived also by siblings Ana Marie Bruenger of Fort Bragg, California; Paul H. Baez and Marianne of Arlington, Texas; Alfonso Baez Jr. of Bayonne, New Jersey; Rev. Samuel Baez and Mim of Waterford, Connecticut; Celia Garcia and Hiram of Naples, Florida; several nephews and nieces and other relatives.

Elias Valdez 1991

Estela began writing poetry in the early 70s while she worked with the Open School concept. Her love for children inspired her to write about them. Here are two poems from her book of poetry:

## THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving means--  
Sharing and caring...  
Our minds soar on  
    cloudy pillows...  
Thousands of thoughts  
    race through...  
Thanksgiving means--  
Acknowledgement of our  
    own worth...  
Of our mental abilities.  
Thanksgiving means--  
Letting others take...  
What we have to give  
And thankful for their  
    receiving spirit...  
Thanksgiving means--  
Keeping resentment channels...  
Open to honest assessment...  
Of feelings not quite understood.  
Thanksgiving means--  
Giving credit to all...  
Who endeavor to keep  
Our spirits high  
In the face of adversity.  
Thanksgiving means--  
Glorying in life...  
That is lent to us from above...  
and seeking for inspiration  
To enrich that life...  
With humility...  
and a will to choose  
Creative paths instead  
of those which  
    are dead ends...!  
Abundance in life is...  
God's gift to us...!

## CARING

From deep within our souls...  
An urgent message comes...  
It comes as a...  
Subtle rain in summer...  
It comes as the first ray of light  
Announces a new day...  
It comes when a  
Child's eyes look at you...  
It comes when a friend says...  
"I need you now!"  
It comes when we observe suffering...  
It comes in the form of a smile...  
When suffering is lessened...  
It comes when...  
CARING brings strength...  
To care for all...  
As God cares for me!

## IVAN RAY AND JOYCE HILTON LITHERLAND

On April 27, 1957, two life-long Presbyterians were united in marriage at the First Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas, with Rev. Collis McKinney of the University Presbyterian Church, El Paso, and Rev. Osro W. Randall officiating. Rev. Thomas Gonzalez of the Spanish Presbyterian Church had done the marriage counseling since Rev. Randall had been out of town.

Ivan Ray Litherland was born August 23, 1931, to Ralph and Mary Phillips Litherland, in Elizabeth, Colorado. He grew up in this small community southeast of Denver, was active in the youth activities of



Elizabeth Presbyterian Church, and graduated from Elizabeth High School in 1949. After working for a short time in South Platte, Nebraska, he was drafted into the Army. Upon completing basic training he was selected for Officers' Candidate School at Fort Bliss and assigned to a gun battery near Tacoma, WA. He returned to Ft. Bliss as an instructor in the Air Defense School and began taking night classes at Texas Western College and attending the University Presbyterian Church near the campus. He became an active member of the college-age youth group and met Joyce Hilton there.

Joyce Elaine Hilton was born in Chicago, Illinois, May 8, 1934, to Ivan Jay and Elizabeth Klauser Hilton, who were living on the Jay-C-

Bar Ranch near Rociada, New Mexico. Joyce grew up on the ranch and in Las Vegas, where she attended Douglas and Castle Grade Schools and McFarland Junior High. She graduated from Vegas High School in 1952.

**Ivan Ray & Joyce**  
**Hilton Litherland**

In 1950 Joyce was selected for the Canadian American School girls Band, and toured with it across Canada for two months. Two of the members received scholarships to Texas Western College in 1951, and the band director offered scholarships to others in the band, including Joyce, and so off she went to El Paso to play in the all-girl drum corps and the Melodears, an all-girl dance band. She immediately became active in the Presbyterian Church near campus and the college-age youth group. She completed a BBA degree with a minor in music in August 1955 and went on to do a year of graduate work at Cal Berkeley in finance and banking. She and Ray became engaged October 27, 1956, the sixth couple to marry out of the college-age group!

Joyce sponsored the High School Youth Group at the First Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas during the year she was home



working for her father at the Jayval Manufacturing Plant. After her marriage and return to El Paso, she and Ray sponsored the high school group at University Church. Upon completing his assignment at Fort Bliss, Ray was sent to a Nike Missile battery in Karlsruhe, Germany, and Joyce was lucky enough to get concurrent travel. During the next three years they also lived in Wurzburg and Kaiserslautern, where their first child, John Jay was born January 1, 1960. They traveled extensively all over Europe, camping frequently.

They returned to their next assignment at Ft. Baker, California, across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco, following Ray's Command and General Staff School at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas. During this time Sharon Ludell was born in Las Vegas and Kenneth Ray was born at Letterman Hospital in San Francisco.

Ray continued taking night courses at the University of Maryland while overseas and at San Francisco State. In 1964 the Army gave him a six-month leave of absence to complete his B.A. degree. Next Ray went to Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, for a short training course prior to assignment as an advisor to the Vietnamese at My Tho, in the Delta of South Vietnam. Joyce returned to Las Vegas for that year and to her old home church. During their time in California, both were members of the Sausalito Presbyterian Church and Ray was ordained as an elder.

Next assignment was back in California, this time at Ft. MacArthur in San Pedro. They bought a home in Gardena, near the freeway to make it easy to commute to the John Tracy Clinic where deaf son Ken attended the Demonstration Nursery School in hope that he would learn to lip read and speak. They joined Gardena Presbyterian Church and were active in the Mariners group. Joyce sang in the choir and taught vacation bible school. When Ray once again received orders to Germany, they enrolled Ken in the Clarke School for the Deaf in Northampton, Massachusetts. From 1969 to 1972, he flew the Atlantic twenty times, often all alone, sometimes in military transports accompanied by one of his parents. Ray was attached to the Embassy in Bonn and John and Sharon attended the American School in Plittersdorf. It was three years of meeting with people from many countries at official functions in an international cooking group and in German conversation groups. They were also very active in Cub Scouts and Girl Scouts and traveled all over Europe once again camping.

Ray returned to the States in October 1971 and retired as a Lt. Colonel after 21 years of service. They made their home in Las Vegas where Ray ran Hilton Motors for a while and did graduate work in computer science at Highlands. He then set up a computer system for the First National Bank in Las Vegas and eventually became its president and CEO after his father-in-law passed away. Joyce managed the Legion Park Branch until her retirement in 1996. Both had an

active role in the church, serving as its treasurers since the late 1970s. Both were on the Session at various times, and Ray served twice as trustee. Joyce sang in the choir, plays bells, and participates in various aspects of the Christian Ed program. They are proud of their strong Presbyterian family and the many accomplishments of their children and seven grandchildren. They continue to enjoy extensive travels worldwide.

Joyce Hilton Litherland 2002

## **George Pardue Bunch, Mary Elizabeth Doyle Bunch, George Clay Bunch, Charles Pardue Bunch**

In July 1973 our family settled in Las Vegas, New Mexico, having selected this town for its beauty, its university, its rich heritage, and the opportunity for George to serve medical needs for a wide area of children. George, along with our friend and pediatrics partner, Kenneth Osgood, set up the first pediatrics clinic between Santa Fe and Pueblo (Colorado). Elizabeth set up her studio for piano students; George Clay started first grade; and Charles entered the public kindergarten (then a pilot project which fortunately soon became permanent).

Even before we had selected a house, we had heard about the Presbyterian Church, the congregation that's "like a family and meets so many community needs." Our first Sunday here, Bonnie and Art Trujillo invited us to an evening potluck supper and presentation given



**George & Elizabeth Bunch**

by Nash Flores and Julian Gutierrez about the Plagge Center for treatment of alcohol abuse, founded and posthumously named for late pastor of the church, Rev. Robert Plagge. If that presentation and the friendly welcome of all those in attendance (to say nothing of the cuisine!) were any indication of the nature of the church, we were sold. The ongoing hospitality, work, and ebullience of the pastor, Rev. Al Juterbock, and Dorothy Juterbock and soon members such as Gary and Elaine Lewis, were big factors in our becoming actively involved in the church.

Through the years and with the guidance of several pastors, we and the other members of the church family have tended each other in joy and sorrow; enfolded the community (through welcoming all who come to the doorstep and through projects such as Habitat for Humanity); funding world projects through Presbyterian Women and One Great Hour of Sharing; and sponsoring youth and adult mission projects to the Mexican border and Central America.

George Clay and Charles became teens and young adults with the constant companionship of other church youth in Sunday School (their first teacher having been Lorene "Tommie" Thompson and later, George, who was also Sunday School superintendent and guitar accompanist), youth bell choir (under the direction of Elizabeth), and youth group (sponsored by Larry and Sherrie Doke). They and other

youth enhanced our Christmas services for several years with brass ensembles. The pastoral guidance of Rev. Dr. Donald F. Wales and Hilda Wales sent an active generation of young people on to college and life literally throughout the world. (George Clay volunteered the year 1989-1990 in Nicaragua, directing activities at an orphanage and planning and building a school. Charles and his wife Carol joined Christian Peacemaker Teams in 2001 for work in Mexico and Colombia and have shared their experiences and music in our services.)

George Clay was a teen Deacon and member of the selection committee for Rev. Wales. Charles was on the retreat committee. George chaired the personnel committee which selected Rev. Elizabeth Graham as our interim pastor and served as co-chair of the pastor selection committee for Rev. Michelle Vettters. He has been chairman of the church directory project and the memorial tile wall. Elizabeth has been ongoing choir accompanist and church organist and pianist.

We've seen many people come and go, many new babies take meaningful places in our midst, and dear ones depart after long or short lives of service. In 1992, we invited Albert and Rebecca Bourbon to join our medical and church community, where they have taken active parts. We welcome Charles and Carol and George Clay and his wife Megan for visits in our church and home.

Our involvement in the boards, committees, and other projects from the 1970s into the twenty-first century have been a good mix of hard work, meaningful relationships with our co-workers, satisfaction with most of the results, and the realization that there's always more to do than could possibly be completed. But the joy of sharing the GOOD NEWS of Christianity with our church family and wider community is the heart of our life at First Presbyterian Church.

Elizabeth Bunch 2002

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